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Prints and Drawings *by* Gabriel de Saint-Aubin

Prints and Drawings *by* Gabriel de Saint-Aubin *1724-1780*

Catalogue prepared by Victor Carlson, Ellen D'Oench, and Richard S. Field

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DAVISON ART CENTER
Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
March 7-April 13, 1975

BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART
Baltimore, Maryland
April 25-June 8, 1975

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition marks the first glimpse of a charming but neglected artist, Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. While we are showing about forty percent of his etchings, only a tiny fraction of the drawings is included, so prolific was Gabriel's devotion to recording the life around him. Still, this is the artist's first American showing; the only other took place in Paris in 1925. We claim neither that a radically new view of the artist is being proposed, nor that one may find an abundance of unpublished works of art or information. Our goal has been rather simple—to offer an opportunity to view a relatively unknown and inaccessible body of work, most of which has migrated to this side of the Atlantic in the past thirty or forty years. We gladly acknowledge our debt to the vast contributions of Émile Dacier who devoted much of his life to the study of Saint-Aubin. Two decades have elapsed since his last publication, so it is time to look again. We hope that this exhibition will stimulate further research and provide considerable pleasure for a wide public.

There are many who have helped to make this exhibition possible by sharing their knowledge, making their collections available to us, and being willing to part with their treasures. First and foremost is the grandest collector and print amateur on these shores, Lessing J. Rosenwald. Not only does he possess by far the largest group of works by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin in America, but he never waivered when confronted by our request to lend a quarter of the works being exhibited. Andrew Robison of the National Gallery of Art and Ruth Fine Lehrer of Alverthorpe Gallery expedited both the loan and our research. The Metropolitan Museum of Art also granted our requests with enthusiasm, while Janet S. Byrne, Colta Feller Ives, Jacob Bean, and Weston Naef helped us in every way. At the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston we owe our thanks to Eleanor A. Sayre and Sue Welsh Reed; at the Philadelphia Museum of Art our gratitude goes to Evan Turner, Kneeland McNulty, and Ellen Jacobowitz; Joseph Riahel of the John G. Johnson Collection not only approved the loan of three virtually unknown sketchbooks, but saw to their restoration so they could be shown. We thank Seymour Slive and Agnes Mongan of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; George Szabo of the Robert Lehman Collection; Sherman E. Lee and Louise Richards of the Cleveland Museum of Art; Charles Ryskamp and Felice Stampfle of the Pierpont Morgan Library; Millard F. Rogers, Jr. and Kristin Spangenberg of the Cincinnati Art Museum; and Harold Joachim and Esther Sparks of the Art Institute of Chicago, all of whom were both generous and enthusiastic in their support of our undertaking. We would also like to express our appreciation to those colleagues who made it possible for us to see and study works in their care, namely Michel Melot at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Elizabeth Roth of the New York Public Library; Roy Fisher of Wildenstein & Company, New York; and Eric Stiebel of Rosenberg and Stiebel, New York. To Norman Leitman of New York and Professor Judith Colton of Yale University goes much gratitude for many favors.

To the private lenders we feel a special obligation not only because they often took works of art from their walls, but because their zeal to collect leads to the eventual enrichment of our public collections. Those who have lent include two Anonymous Collectors; Rosenberg and Stiebel, New York; H. Shickman Gallery, New York; Mrs. Charles E. Slatkin, New York; Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Smith, Bethesda, Maryland; Mr. Benjamin Sonnenberg, New York; and Mrs. Herbert N. Straus, New York.

Finally we wish to thank all those others who have been so helpful, the Registrars of the various institutions, including at Wesleyan, Janette Boothby, and at Baltimore, Diana Schramm. William Van Saun was responsible for the design and production of the catalogue; his good taste and helpfulness, as usual, were indispensable and always available. Lastly, we would all like to thank Elise W. Snyder for her editing of our texts.

V.C.
E.D'O.
R.S.F.

Exchange. Balto. Museum of Art. 12-9-75

Figure 1:
Le Tombeau (not in exhibition)
Etching, ca. 1770
167 x 129 mm.
Dacier 828-15, only state
Collection: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

GABRIEL DE SAINT-AUBIN AND HIS TIME

"Gabriel-Jacques de Saint-Aubin, born April 14, 1724, was a painter. Full of erudition, he failed to fulfill his talent although he drew all the time and everywhere. Eccentric, unsociable, and untidy, it was fortunate that he remained a bachelor. He died in 1780 in the house of his older brother where he had been brought a few days earlier. He left a number of drawings in poor condition."[1]

This sketch, written by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's older brother Charles-Germain (1721-1786), together with two other biographical notes and a handful of documents, testifies to the near-universal indifference of the contemporaries of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin to his work. Yet today we see him as one of the most remarkable observers of the 18th-century scene who has left a uniquely spontaneous visual legacy of the streets, theaters, Salons, and public places of Paris. This first exhibition of the prints and drawings of Saint-Aubin in America, nearly 200 years after his death, reflects his passionate curiosity in the human events of his world. It further demonstrates the variety of creative energy in the artistic life of Paris in the middle decades of the century. Currents of Baroque allegory, Rococo ease, and pre-Romantic mood mingle in Saint-Aubin's work as they flowed through the art of his time.

The tiny scenes, many of them crowded with figures caught up in the moment's happening and saturated with the atmospheric and hazy sunlight of his city, were almost all unsold during his life. The "number of drawings" which Charles-Germain estimated to be in Saint-Aubin's studio at his death was "four or five thousand." These were only a part of the last effects of paintings, etchings, books, and papers in such monumental disarray that official inventory proceedings were halted until they could be put in order.[2]

Saint-Aubin chose to bequeath only one object from all this accumulation of his life's work, the gold medal of the Academy of Saint-Luc which he left to his sister.[3] This single symbol of achievement (from an organization considered to be inferior or, as one contemporary, F.M. von Grimm, put it, "composed of all those artists who have neither the talent nor the reputation to be received in the Royal Academy"[4]) bears ironic witness to his failure. For Saint-Aubin had tried three times to become a member of the Royal Academy and never gave up the ambition to be taken seriously as a painter, though apparently he had neither the patience to perfect his oil technique nor the ability (or interest) in the full-blown style of the grand manner which would have insured him his acceptance. It was with painting that the 18th-century artist gained his initial reputation and acquired the market for his drawings and prints. Although these were avidly collected by such patrons as the banker Pierre Crozat who owned 19,000 of them,[5] an artist had to first prove his worth in the arena of the Academy.

Certainly Saint-Aubin set out on the traditional route to success. His family were respectable members of the Parisian bourgeoisie. His father was Embroiderer to the King and most of his five brothers, two sisters, and sisters-in-law were accomplished artisans, porcelain-painters, draughtsmen, and engravers whose professions were in great demand in Paris during the *ancien regime*.[6] By 1750, Saint-Aubin was a student at the Royal Academy studying under Étienne Jeaurat (1699-1789) and Hyacinthe Colin de Vermont (1693-1761). The two were influential directors of the Academy and rarely failed to attend its meetings in the middle decades of the century.[7] They were so solicitous of success for their protégés that, in 1747, other students launched a petition to Lenormant de Tournehem, the General Superintendant of the King's Works, to protest

this unfair contriving to secure medals for their pet pupils.[8] Apparently Saint-Aubin was not among the favored. For while he won the second prize for students in a quarterly award of 1750 and the second prize in the Grand Prix competition for 1753, he set his sights on winning the Grand Prix in 1752, 1753, and 1754 and lost. And although he placed top among the finalists in the competition for a place in the *École royale des élèves protégés* in 1753; he failed in this endeavor as well. Charles-Germain noted in his *Recueil* that he lost because of "unjust" treatment. While this is debatable, it may in part explain why Saint-Aubin thereafter dropped all further efforts to become an Academician.

The question arises, however, why Saint-Aubin did not attempt to gain admission through the usual channels. Despite its hieratical governing body, the Royal Academy was not, in fact, difficult to enter. Any artist of ability in the 18th century could become a member and, once installed, could work in a variety of genres.[9] The most difficult route was to aim for the Grand Prix. To achieve admission in this way, the candidate had to submit a preliminary drawing of the prescribed biblical "history" subject. Four or five were then selected as finalists and put into a locked cell to carry out the finished painting.[10] The work was then exhibited and judged by the directors and invited jurists. The process involved considerable ability to finish a work quickly in competition with such extraordinarily talented artists as Jean-Honoré Fragonard who won the Grand Prix in 1752. Failing in this route, Saint-Aubin could have chosen to become a probationary *agréé* of the Academy by requesting proposal by an officer, and by submitting a painting acceptable to a two-thirds majority of the members. This was an important step since the *agréé* was allowed to exhibit his work along with the Academician in the most important bi-annual artistic event in Paris, the Salon of the Royal Academy in the Louvre. The *agréé* was required to submit a painting *(morceau de réception)* three years later to obtain full membership, but this rule was strictly enforced only for a short time after 1751.[11] For example, Saint-Aubin's brother, Augustin (1737-1807), who became an *agréé* in 1771, showed his works in the Salons until 1789 without ever becoming an Academician.[12] Judith Colton has pointed out that the "royal art machine" had to be flexible in contending with a public newly awakened to the art market. The jury system did not exclude non-conformists. Once the artist was permitted to introduce himself to the public by means of the Salon, he could readily sell his Rococo themes, landscapes, or genre scenes on the side.[13] Fragonard last exhibited in the Salon of 1767 and withdrew as an Academician when he found it just as profitable to go it alone. Jean-Baptiste Greuze also discovered that he could get along without the Academy when, after exhibiting in the Salons of 1755 to 1765 as an *agréé*, he resigned in 1769 after a dispute.[14] The evidence then points to the fact that Saint-Aubin was no victim of a rigid system but was too impatient to reach his goals to acquire sufficient training in the painstaking process of oil painting.

To compound this flawed development, he "neglected" painting according to Charles-Germain even though he never gave it up. He was already, at the age of 23, a "professor" at Jacques-François Blondel's *École des arts*, where he taught human proportions, "historical" attributes, and allegory "for the ornament of religious and secular buildings and for fêtes," as well as "all that may contribute to the freeing and animating of the student's talent."[15] He may have taught there until Blondel's death in 1774. Saint-Aubin's 14 or so extant paintings[16] are frequently marred by heavy over-working of impasto, yet apparently some of his oils were acceptable to the jury of the Academy of Saint-Luc. There he exhibited 8 works for the first and only time in 1774, and was listed on its rolls as a director and teacher in 1776, ironically, the same year that it was suppressed. The organiza-

tion, founded by the artist's guild in 1650,[17] had been a constant irritant to the rival Royal Academy. The increasing popularity of the Salons of the Academy of Saint-Luc, especially that of 1774, determined Royal authority to tighten its centralized power and to support the Royal Academy in its long campaign to destroy it. Although there had been no Salon preceding that of 1774 for ten years, each of the seven Salons of the Academy of Saint-Luc after 1752 averaged about 1500 works.[18] When it was dissolved a group of former members exhibited in the *Salon des grâces* of the Colisée Palace in 1776 where Saint-Aubin displayed 15 works.[19] The following year's exhibition was attended by huge crowds but closed by government decree. All in all, Saint-Aubin's public offerings were modest for an artist of such prodigious creativity.

Because opportunities for an artist to acquire a reputation outside the Salons of the Academy were small, and because of Saint-Aubin's limitations as a painter, he sold very little of his total work. Eighty paintings, valued at 96 livres, were in his studio at his death.[20] He had sold only two in his life-time.[21] Some of his works were included in two sales of the 1760s and '70s.[22] He must have intended to sell some of his etchings although the small number of impressions known to us together with their fragility of line indicate that he sold only a few. He was commissioned to illustrate Philippe de Prétot's *Spectacle de l'histoire romaine*, 1760, and the petition of the army officier Desbans to the King and Queen in 1775.[23] However, it is not likely that he acquired, or even sought, patrons for the catalogues of the Salons and private sales which he so profusely illustrated with dozens of tiny sketches. These remain today as precious documents of the artistic life of Paris in the 18th century. In 1772, Grimm wrote in his *Correspondance littéraire* that he was much taken by the drawings sketched by an "artist-dealer" on the margins of the catalogue at the sale of the effects of the Duc de Choiseul. He felt certain that a series of similar catalogues illustrated with drawings of collections would have a market.[24] Grimm's editor and Émile Dacier have assumed that the writer was undoubtedly referring to Saint-Aubin. But in any case Grimm's delight was hardly shared. There were 100 of these illustrated catalogues left in Saint-Aubin's effects. These, together with 40 books illustrated with drawings in the margins, were evaluated at 74 livres.[25] Most of them were bought by the Baron de Saint-Julien and the rest dispersed after the death of Augustin. Only about a third are known today. Dacier lists 3 illustrated catalogues from the Salons of the Academy of 1761, 1769, and 1777, and 33 of collections of private sales from 1769 to 1779.[26]

With this dismally small number of works sold in Saint-Aubin's lifetime, how did he make a living? Grimm's characterization of him suggests that he picked up some additional income either as a self-employed dealer or as an assistant to collection or auction managers. Perhaps his brothers and sisters helped to support him or perhaps the income from his teaching in private lessons and at Blondel's school sufficed. His needs were small. The miniscule number of private effects at his death attest to a lack of concern for personal possessions. And Charles-Germain in his *Livre* deplores his brother's slovenly appearance and relates that he tidied up by using a "white crayon to powder his hair and whiten his stockings." Indeed, it appears that financial return was irrelevant to the main business of his life which was to draw and etch for sheer pleasure, or perhaps out of sheer compulsion.

Contemporaries who commented on Saint-Aubin's life agree that there was something altogether unnatural about an artist who spent his time drawing instead of painting. Perhaps it was this that blinded most of them to the merits of Gabriel's graphic art and inclined them to mockery and even some vulgarity at his expense. The fact that

Grimm failed to mention Saint-Aubin reveals the slight regard for the artist despite his 25 years of intense productivity. In his *Livre*, Charles-Germain dismisses most of his brother's paintings as frightfully over-worked and refers to his passion for drawing "all the time and everywhere." He adds that Sophie Arnould, the celebrated singer and friend of the family, watched Saint-Aubin draw and remarked that "he has no teeth at all, he bites off more than he can chew" ("il fait plus de croûtes qu'il n'en mange"). He also reports Greuze's remark that Saint-Aubin had a "priapism of drawing." In 1779, a pamphlet circulated at the Salon entitled *Janot au Salon*. Included was a mocking article in which Saint-Aubin and Hogarth—one the compulsive, uncritical observer and the other the fault-finder—were passionately examining the exhibition. Saint-Aubin, referred to as "Monsieur Croquetel," is depicted as always "sketching in gardens, Salons, auctions, and public places."[27] The *Mémoires secrets* of Feb. 13, 1780 memorialized him in only three lines: "He was the most prolific draughtsman that we have, perhaps, ever seen. One never met him without a pencil in his hand." And in 1783, Pahin de la Blancherie wrote that Gabriel was "possessed" with an "excessive urge to see everything, know everything, and draw everything."[28]

There is some evidence that Saint-Aubin cared about the slights of his contemporaries. He continued to attend and sketch the Salons which must have been a constant reminder to him of the social and financial inequalities between those who were in the Academy and those who were not. And some fugitive lines from two of his own poems scattered in the margins of his volumes of verse by his friend Jean-Michel Sedaine indicate disillusion. One is the undated draft of a poem to the Marquis de Marigny, brother of Mme de Pompadour and Superintendent of the King's Works, for some favor now unknown. Saint-Aubin regrets that he is unable to accept de Marigny's offer since he is among those "who have not the good fortune" to belong to the Royal Academy. In another, dated Oct. 29, 1765, in his usual minute handwriting, Gabriel writes a critical summation of his life. He describes himself as a lover of the arts, childless yet wishing to instruct a future race, full of the urge to create but capable only of caricature, "an amiable impostor" whose signature on all his works gives him away as a "vain plaything of opinion."[29] Of this same discouragement there survives only one image, a sketch drawn just before he died. After a life's work of recreating the lighthearted world of Paris, he drew a cadaver stretched out in the foreground of a room which is filled with a disarray of works of art, discarded objects, and broken instruments, as if to allegorize the dashed hopes of an artist's dream. It is a shocking and revealing work.

The last 18th-century mention of Saint-Aubin is an attack in the revolutionary pamphlet *les Pantins des boulevards* (n.d.). He was termed a "blockhead," one of the "most determined rascals of his breed among the arrant good-for-nothings in the aviary of birds at the Academy of Saint-Luc."[30] With that, Saint-Aubin disappeared into a century of neglect until his work was re-evaluated and revived by the Goncourt brothers in their *l'Art du dix-huitième siècle* of 1873.

While his contemporaries deplored the fact that Saint-Aubin drew to excess and neglected painting, there was at least one who considered his genius to lie in his pencil. In one of two poems addressed to Saint-Aubin, Sedaine cautioned him to give up elevated themes such as his *Laban cherchant ses Dieux:*

> Leave all those Homeric heroes
> And the story of old Laban
> With that cunning woman

Who would not relinquish the bench
Where the idols of her father lay.
Instead, draw for Cythera
Something affectionate and gay,
A little nothing, a light sketch
On this plain piece of white paper.[31]

With this advice, Sedaine reflected not only the enthusiastic response of the art *amateur* to the spontaneous and immediate sketch, but also the mid-century decline of the Academy's hegemony over the selection of subject matter. Just as the authority of the Academy had been nibbled away by popular relish for free-wheeling art criticism and the exhibitions of competing, more loosely-structured artistic groups, so it could not enforce the traditional rules of the hierarchy of genres. At the beginning of the century these rules had been challenged by such theoreticians as the Abbé Du Bos. But it was the artists and critics from 1730 to 1770, including the Comte de Caylus, Charles-Nicolas Cochin fils, and Denis Diderot who reached a broader public with their call for reform of the old arbitrary standards of taste. Diderot's *Essay on Painting* influenced the trend toward democratization of artistic themes by stressing the importance of man's subjective response to the nuances of meaning in a work of art which should be free to deal with the humblest of subjects as long as it was instructive as well as "true to life."[32] Against this background, Saint-Aubin's work stands as something of a paradox. His selection of themes was so eclectic as to encompass nearly every subject or genre of his century. However, the scenes of everyday life at which he excelled and which were so enormously in vogue, were scarcely ever expanded into compositions which would have been sold as finished works of art. Furthermore, he neither shed his life-long predilection for old-hat allegory, nor catered to Rococo eroticism, nor informed his art with the type of bourgeois morality that became an important theme for painting during the final two decades of his life.

Indeed a central question about Saint-Aubin's art concerns his point of view. What was important to him? Allegory, perhaps. It suited his erudition and schoolmasterly proclivities. His first dated drawing (1747) transformed a meeting of Royal Academicians into an image of Louis XV dressed as a Roman emperor in a chariot pulled by lions. He hands medals to the Academy, personified as a semi-nude woman holding palette and brushes, and attended by putti representing Painting, Sculpture, and Engraving. His *Allégorie sur le mariage du Comte de Provence* (catalogue 31), done 24 years later, is similarly filled with allegorical references. The 60 allegories specifically listed in Dacier's catalogue raisonné do not encompass the innumerable other compositions which include metaphorical symbolism. The mail-carrier is accompanied by Mercury in *La petite poste*, and the lawyers meet under swirling clouds of putti in his last dated etching, the *Conférence des avocats* (figure 2). One must conclude that here again Saint-Aubin was little concerned with new trends or for the market-place. Although there was a survival of allegory until the eve of the revolution, Diderot reflected the general opinion when he said, "I will never cease to regard allegory as a sterile resource; weak, incapable of taking part in reality, and forced to summon hieroglyphics to its aid."[33]

As Sedaine suggested, Saint-Aubin's forte was the observation of what he saw before him and not the depiction of elevated themes. Although the major portion of Gabriel's work recorded the spectacle of Paris, it appears that the act of drawing and etching was an impelling necessity for his private pleasure alone. His choice of subjects followed no pattern which would have enabled patrons to form a coherent notion of his point of view.

For instance, during his first 10 years of printmaking (1750-59), he produced 4 scenes of observed life, 2 pastorals, 2 book illustrations, 2 allegories, 2 history subjects, 1 monument, 1 address card, and 1 view of art objects in a private collection. Moreover, many of his drawings were unfinished, or sketched in notebooks with marginal notes, poems, and personal reminders. Yet, the evidence points to the fact that Saint-Aubin could have considerably enlarged his sphere of patronage, despite his status as a non-Academician, had he considered it worthwhile to give his full attention to becoming a master of genre. Many capitalized on the appetite for contemporary scene. After 1730, prints and illustrated books on urban life, travel literature, and stories such as the *Fables* of LaFontaine were widely circulated. The internationalism of the print market had much to do with the influence of Dutch and Italian genre on French art and encouraged the introduction of Dutch paintings into many of the non-official exhibitions of the period. Dozens of industrious print-makers in Paris either copied the works of others (much as photography today) or engraved their own works on these subjects. De Caylus etched Edmé Bouchardon's *Cris de Paris* (published from 1737-47 by Fessard), whose scenes of daily life were so popular that Francois Boucher and Cochin produced their own series in 1737.[34] These, together with the prints of Bernard Picart, Claude Gillot, and Antoine Watteau were undoubtedly known to Saint-Aubin and formed the background for genre art at mid-century. Jean de Jullienne had 622 of Watteau's paintings and drawings reproduced in etchings in 1734. Many of these scenes, such as the *Contrat de la noce* and *L'Accordée*, resemble the crowded suburban fêtes in Saint-Aubin's painted and graphic work. Even Saint-Aubin's teacher, Jeaurat, gave up academic subjects and became a busy practitioner of scenes from "low life." The *Mercure de France* stated that his views of carnivals, vendors at Les Halles, and prostitutes (such as the *Conduite des filles de joie au lieutenant de police* of 1757 in the Carnavalet Museum, Paris), were "well received" at the Salons of 1753, '55, and '57.[35] Dacier wrote that it was Jeaurat who "opened the eyes" of Saint-Aubin to the streets of Paris.[36] But it is difficult to find specific analogies between the wide range of subject matter in Saint-Aubin's work and that of Jeaurat or, indeed, any other French contemporary.

While in France there were few comparable chroniclers of scene, the graphic work of the Englishman William Hogarth shows some striking similarities with the work of Saint-Aubin. Hogarth had probably not been to Paris since his fishing expedition for engravers in 1743.[37] In 1746, however, his friend, Jean-André Rouquet, an enameller who lived in London, published a French explication of Hogarth's prints. Although Hogarth's satire was too strong for French taste, his popularity (along with a general Anglomania) was at a high level at mid-century. Rouquet moved back to Paris and in 1753 wrote Hogarth that he wanted a copy of his *Analysis of Beauty* "before anyone else in France." In 1754 Rouquet published a long section on the English artist in his *L'etát des arts en Angleterre.*[38] It was just at this time that Saint-Aubin began to etch. His first print, *Vue de la foire de Bezons* of 1750 (catalogue 3) resembles *Southwark Fair* (1733/4) in its exuberant vitality. Its dominant mounted figure is a marked look-alike for the drummeress in the foreground of Hogarth's print and the reclining figure on top of a carriage is reminiscent of the one in Hogarth's scene at Tyburn in the *Idle Apprentice* series (1747). The little dancing figures in Saint-Aubin's *Bal d'Auteuil* (cat. 25) are lightly suspended in mid-air just as are the dancers in the second plate of Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty.* The two artists shared an affinity for sketches of auction rooms and theaters as well as specific events and characters. Saint-Aubin's *le Scélérat Damiens* (catalogue 17), unique at that time in French art as a real-life portrait of a criminal,

undoubtedly had its direct prototype in Hogarth's portrayal of *Sarah Malcolm* (1732/3), the convicted murderess awaiting execution in her cell. Both men were disappointed by their failure to gain the recognition each felt he deserved. Hogarth's last print *Tailpiece; or the Bathos* (1764) with its undertone of autobiography in the figure of the nude *Time* sinking down in despair among the broken symbols of a life-time is remarkably analogous to the cadaver in the studio of the *Chambre de Saint-Aubin* of 1780. While the *Janot au Salon* pamphlet, mentioned earlier, also drew the two together as compatible companions, they were quite obviously, worlds apart in temperamental, stylistic, and entrepreneurial approach. Hogarth's forceful engraver's burin enabled his plate to hold up to public demand for a large number of impressions, while Saint-Aubin's swift and atmospheric etched renderings on copper were suited only to small editions. Unlike Hogarth, Saint-Aubin was not interested in psychological nuance, social commentary, or comprehensive anecdotal detail. However, more than any of the other French artists who were influenced by Hogarth's art, Saint-Aubin understood his urban sensibility. Where Jeaurat seized on his titillating episode, and Greuze was the first to incorporate his moralizing,[39] Saint-Aubin was Hogarth's French counterpart in his acute observation and engagement with the spectacle and breadth of human activity in Paris.

Saint-Aubin continued to allegorize, to record, and to touch on typical Rococo themes of nudes, amorous lovers, and fêtes well into his later years. But popular taste was moving in quite another direction. Even Boucher, who was another of Gabriel's teachers, and whose work dominated the Rococo era, was to come under attack. Diderot, reviewing the mythological and pastorale paintings that Boucher had submitted to the Salon of 1765, wrote, "The degradation of his taste, color, composition, and drawing has followed step by step the dissolution of today's morals."[40] He later complained in his *Pensées detachées* that he had "seen enough tits and behinds," and added that he would give ten Watteaus for one Teniers.[41] Jeaurat and others quickly recognized the movement towards an art of *sensibilité* and, as Wescher put it, "exploited the applause of Diderot" by shifting their subject matter to more homely themes.[42] Diderot's endorsement of Greuze, whose paintings were the "first to supply art with morals,"[43] rejected Baroque artificiality and Rococo art-for-art's-sake, as well as the work of those of Saint-Aubin's generation who contrived to paint and draw for the pleasure of it.

If Saint-Aubin took no pains to cater to the new moralizing spirit, is there anything in his technique which sheds light on his attitude toward the world around him? Clearly, his work bears witness to the intimate and uncritical relationship of an artist to his subject. The drawings of the Salons are suffused with the excitement Saint-Aubin shared with the gallery-goers. The dancing figures in the parks, the agitated audiences and spectators at plays, lectures, the laying of a corner-stone, or the launching of an unsinkable boat, and even the hundreds of exact sketches of works of art demonstrate the passionate involvement of an observer rather than the distance of an entertainer or judge. There is a subtle interplay of device in many of his finest works which communicates this point of view. The certainty with which Saint-Aubin delineated his subjects—whether with crayon or etching stylus—suggests a snapshot-like arrest of movement. At the same time, the nervous vitality of his line and the mobility of his chiaroscuro impart such energetic movement to his scenes that we are not permitted to remain as passive witnesses but are actively drawn into the tiny compositions. Occasionally the major point of interest is placed off-center or the viewer is moved closer to the scene than expected. We look up at an angle at the duelling actors in his painting *la Parade du*

boulevard of ca. 1760 (National Gallery, London), and are placed obliquely on the landing of the Grand Stairway among the visitors in the *Vue du Salon du Louvre en 1753* (catalogue 12). We participate at the same eye-level as the audience at *Blondel démontrant des machines*, a drawing of 1770, or as the congregation in his sketches of church interiors, or as the café-goer in *les Nouvellistes* (catalogue 7). Figures are often cut off at the edges of his compositions, enhancing the fragmentary and impressionistic quality of the artist's observation. Saint-Aubin's response to the significance of event is also achieved by subordinating the individuality of the figures to the dramatic light and expanse of their setting. This is an early phenomenon in his art which continues and increases in emphasis throughout his later works, as in the etching, *une Conférence des avocats*, and in his last sketchbook, presently in the Stockholm Museum. Enormous interior spaces are filled with motes of dust in filtered sun—or candlelight which streams down from high above the crowds, or relieves the gloom of cellar rooms, interiors of Gothic churches, the Parlement, Invalides, Colisée, and Salons. Lantern or moonlight dramatizes the night scenes in his etchings the *Marchands en plein vent* and the *Théâtre Italien*.

Occasionally Saint-Aubin applied these pictorial devices to subjects of picturesque historicism. This enables us to speculate that he was well aware of the powerful effect on the imagination of the pre-Romantic themes of death and decay. These works are only a fraction of his total production, but are significant indications of his wide-ranging eclectic yet subjective point of view. Saint-Aubin enhances the drama of the sword-flourishing skeleton in *le Tombeau* (figure 1) with an unnatural and eerie light. Robert Rosenblum has described the imaginative landscape in *la Naumachie des jardins de Monceau*, 1778 (Coll. Mme Henri Dacier) as one whose "hazy atmosphere and blurred architectural fragments offer the nebulous stimuli for a late 18th century daydream or, in fact, an early 19th century one."[44] The painting of tiny figures gesturing among shadowy ruins has few counterparts in Saint-Aubin's art. They suggest preoccupations similar to those found in Fragonard's Tivoli drawings, and in a great number of landscapes by Hubert Robert, both of whom had worked in Rome and returned to Paris in the 1760's. Saint-Aubin's *l'Incendie de l'Hôtel-Dieu en 1772* is one of his most dramatic gouaches. Flames leap up to the sky outlining the Gothic facade and lighting up the rushing figures with flickering lines. He also sketched the gutted ruins after the fire as did Robert.[45] In addition to these subjects, Saint-Aubin painted the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. The lost *Effet du tremblement de terre de Lisbonne* (1774?) was exhibited in the Academy of Saint-Luc exhibition of 1774 and praised by the *Almanach historique* of 1776 as inspiring horror in a "terrible event."[46]

There is a good possibility that he was influenced in his treatment of these and a few other subjects by the ideas of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. The expanded space and the dramatic and unexpected angles of light and shadow in the early etching, *Vue du Salon du Louvre en 1753*, suggests the looming architectural spaces and mysterious light of Piranesi's imaginary prison scenes. It is probable that Saint-Aubin had seen Piranesi's architectural renderings around mid-century at Blondel's *École des arts*. Here was hospitable ground for the vortex of new ideas brought back to Paris by Jean-Laurent Le Geay and other young architects from Rome. In 1742, five years before Saint-Aubin joined Blondel's staff, Le Geay attached himself to the school where he taught, perhaps, until 1748.[47] Le Geay is now known chiefly for his etchings and drawings of ruins, mausoleums, and funeral urns set in dream landscapes, but his influence in Rome and Paris was strong. Cochin wrote that he was one of the great geniuses of his time. John

Harris has gathered convincing evidence to show that Le Geay was one of the major influences on Piranesi who had arrived in Rome in 1740 and had undoubtedly associated himself with the French Academy. Le Geay's wildly imaginative collections of etchings pre-dated Piranesi's *Prima Parte de Architetture* of 1743, the first work to establish his life-long preoccupation with vast scale and dramatic light and shadow.[40] It surely can be assumed that Piranesi's early editions of the *Vedute di Roma* and the *Carceri* etchings of 1745 were brought to Paris by the returning architects or sent there by his French publisher, Jean Bouchard. They would, therefore, have been known to Saint-Aubin at Blondel's school.

Yet this strain of Romanticism should not be seen as a dominating force in Saint-Aubin's work any more than should the possible influence of the style of J.B.S. Chardin on his domestic interiors or of Boucher on his fêtes and nudes. Comparisons between his work and that of his predecessors or contemporaries must remain qualified. There are thematic and stylistic *leitmotifs* which appear, disappear, and reappear in his work regardless of chronology. He neither relinquished the Baroque or Rococo idioms nor moved into one of the dual currents which were leading to later 18th century Neo-classicism and Romanticism. Indeed, while his graphic art reflects many complex international artistic forces, it remains one man's intensely private vision.

Perhaps the reason that Gabriel de Saint-Aubin persisted in his passion to record every aspect of his time is the obvious one. He was by nature an outsider who was impelled to see, to know, and to preserve. He signed, dated, and often annotated his drawings and etchings long after their execution as if he wanted to leave little to chance in sharing the substance and meaning of what he saw. And the surreal accumulation of his life's work found in his studio at his death is sufficient evidence that he was a man who discarded nothing. In their glancing views, their swift vitality of line, and their ambiance of moving light, Gabriel's sketches, more than the finished art of his era, faithfully chronicle the customs and pleasures of his city and the multiplicity of human activities which it fostered and embraced.

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Figure 2:
Une Conférence des Avocats (not in exhibition)
Etching, 1776
177 x 121 mm.
Dacier 445-48, second state of two
Collection: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

GABRIEL DE SAINT-AUBIN AS ETCHER

I. Introduction

In a century that reduced the printmaker to the role of translator of painting and drawing, Gabriel de Saint-Aubin stood alone in his efforts to preserve the integrity of the print. In order to revive etching, Saint-Aubin had to seek in two radically different directions. First, he had to turn back to the previous century for inspiration. If he did not consciously study Rembrandt, Claude, and della Bella, he intuitively re-learned their lessons about pictorial drawing with the etched line. Second, he brought to the medium an entirely new subject matter which he integrated with his personalistic approach.[1] One cannot focus on one without the other, anymore than Daumier's innovations in lithography can be understood without reference to his portrayal of Parisian life.[2] This interaction of form and content, so much forgotten by the formalist critics of our times, is crucial for an evaluation of Gabriel's achievement. Even when he turned to allegory, a genre disparaged by those who have championed Saint-Aubin, he was at pains to integrate his flights of serendipidous fantasy with the actual place and population of Paris.[3] This intense commitment to the present threaded its way through most of his work; it was the one element whose absence insured failure, as in his historical subjects whether painted or etched. This love of the present was matched by, if not born of, Gabriel's spontaneity. The two went hand in hand. While their presence did not guarantee artistic success, they did inaugurate some of the fundamental changes in vision which would be taken up by lithography and photography in the next century. This was an attitude that valued overall realism, not detailed naturalism, that prized compositional spontaneity, and attempted the portrayal of a moment.[4]

If Saint-Aubin's life and art are chronicles of contemporary Parisian life, they are also a record of consistent failure. As charming and original as his productions may be, they have all too often been regarded as the ramblings of an eccentric, rejected member of society. Until new documents can shed more precise light on just how and with whom Gabriel worked and earned a living, we must accept Dacier's portrayal of him as poor, somewhat isolated, idiosyncratic and living only by dint of his artistic drive *("priapisme de dessin")*. Whatever kernel of truth there be in this romantic picture, we must also admit that Gabriel was not entirely equal to the goals he set for himself. His incessant need to draw, seemingly without pause for reflection, are part of a hyperactive syndrome (one of Gabriel's annotated sales catalogues, that of Mariette in Boston, contains over 1200 marginal sketches!). This compulsion impeded development of a self-critical faculty which would not have tolerated so many unfinished projects. His etchings contain considerable internal evidence of Gabriel's unresolved dissatisfaction and compulsive experimentation.[5] The charm, the wit, the incredible freshness of his vision and his hand is marred by a lack of discipline and by a failure to find his own definitive language. The etchings are shot through with experimentation, not so much with the technical (chemical and printing) means, but with the changing use of the etching and drypoint needles themselves. When calling attention to Saint-Aubin's real contributions to the history of etching, it is equally necessary to point out his shortcomings. That the latter grew out of his search to revitalize etching not only takes us a long way toward forgiveness, but also provides us with the means to examine his intentions.

In his art Saint-Aubin was a man of his times. He was perhaps the first "Flâneur," Baudelaire's term for the "Painter of Modern Life."[6] This new breed of artist was to

mirror the heroic in images of contemporary society rather than in outmoded Classical subjects. Unfortunately for him, Saint-Aubin's century was the era of the Academy whose art was couched largely in terms of worn-out Baroque clichés. On the other hand, contemporary life was all too often expressed as the "scène galante" and seen through the veil of Rococo romanticism and allegorical fantasy. Gabriel took the etching into the street, into places of public congregation; the world he evoked in a few square inches of copperplate was one of incessant activity, of informality and intimacy, of nostalgic mixtures of the picturesque and the aristocratic, and of the allegorical with the observed. His juxtapositions of traditional symbolic elements with those of daily life were spawned in a world that adored the medallion, the *cul de lampe*, the frontispiece, the vignette, the engraved calling- or trading-card, the recording of all manner of royal events via classically inspired glorifications, the romanticization of daily tasks through countless series of literary and historical events—all on copper. The album of prints and the illustrated *livre-deluxe* was *de rigeur* among the fashionable and the intellectual alike. Quantity, clarity, and literary density were desiderata of these printed images. Few engravings or etchings were created for their own, purely artistic ends; the vast majority not only reflected or reproduced works in other media, but the very means of production were consonant with the demands for visualized knowledge.[7] Never had an age spent so much to formularize its own fantasy life, as did the eighteenth century to codify the imaginative and spontaneous fancies of painters like Watteau, Fragonard, Boucher, Chardin, Greuze, Huet, Lallemand, Lancret, Lavreince, Robert, etc. Not only were their paintings copied by legions of engravers, but as the century progressed the engravers began copying each other's drawings. It is against this professionalism that Gabriel's originality must be measured. He was hardly able to overturn the conventions that had beset printmaking, but he insisted that etching should be a vehicle of direct expression of intimately observed or spontaneously conceived ideas. In Gabriel's works, the flow of light and space is endowed with the same freedom as the piling up of humanity, the accumulation of symbolic detail, and the description of interior settings. Movement characterizes every level of perception, so that the best etchings achieve a unity of line and representation absent from the vast majority of French prints of Saint-Aubin's time. His only equal was Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) whose prints, however, were not concerned with a vision of Gabriel's Paris.

Saint-Aubin never reached the density of expression and refinement of means that Fragonard managed in his little *Petit Parc* or his *Bacchanales* of 1763 (both undoubtedly indebted to Saint-Aubin's works of 1760).[8] As we have already indicated, Gabriel's etchings are unresolved and flawed in a way that many of the drawings are not. He constantly fiddled with his plates, and not just by endlessly altering or retouching them from state to state. As we will try to demonstrate, it is in their very morphologies that the etchings exhibit contrasts and conflicts of approach. This is where the artist stands revealed as unsure of both means and ends. Gabriel had a vision of what he wished for etching, but it required a multitude of renouncements. He was deeply ambivalent about breaking with the academic styles of his time, bravely struggling to avoid the mechanical procedures employed by the accomplished etcher-engravers of his day, and too much hemmed in by the Rococo artificialities of the more popular modes of representation. Torn by conflicts, he only managed about 52 plates—not a very concerted attack on the establishment. The fact that most of these survive in but very few and often unique impressions substantiates the uncertainties the artist must have experienced. The remainder of this study will examine the stylistic development and technical procedures revealed by Gabriel's small printed oeuvre.

II. Stylistic Development

It is tempting to regard *les Deux amants* (Dacier 140-3),[9] *la Conversation Galante* (D. 141-16), and *la Jeune femme à la terrasse* (D. 341-52) as the earliest of Gabriel's works on copper. Although *les Deux amants* is dated 1750, Dacier did not associate the others with it, mainly because the drawing that might be preparatory for *la Conversation* bears an inscription of 1757.[10] In any case, all three betray various degrees of technical tentativeness, especially the *Conversation* which was etched on a scrap of copper that had previously served another publication.[11] The little *Jeune femme* is so totally inexperienced (if it is indeed from Gabriel's hand) that its technical clumsiness has invaded the very drawing itself. Another reason for an early dating of all three is their common involvement with Rococo themes and the decorative *Chinoiserie* of the first half of the eighteenth century. The drawing related to the *Conversation* undoubtedly derives from François Boucher (1703-1770), one of Gabriel's teachers at the *Académie Royale*. For these reasons there is an increased likelihood they were Gabriel's first experiments in etching.

The heavily worked, dark manner of *les Deux amants* is consonant with the other works of the same year, *Marché du boeuf gras* and the *Vue de la foire de Bezons* (D. 645-1 & D.592-2; catalogue 2 & 3). The boldness of *les Deux amants* was now married to Gabriel's natural inclination to depict the spectacles of Paris. Both new works reveal an unusual penchant for curving space and for motion that pivot around some point in the center of the image. The action and the contrasty use of dark and light are quite dramatic. The line is uneven and occasionally downright coarse. While it follows the flow of space and movement, it shows no attempt to acknowledge the surface of the plate. Other passages are lightly, almost too lightly etched (as occurred in the first works). A thematic debt to William Hogarth (1697-1764) is quite possible, as Ellen D'Oench has pointed out. The love of genre, the low viewpoint in the city street, the procession of humanity—a slightly mad humanity in *la Foire de Bezons*—may recall the English satirist, but not Gabriel's heavy-handed and impetuously added hatching. These elements—the manner, curved space, and pictorial drama—seem to derive from an experience of the etchings of Rembrandt (1606-1669). Could Gabriel not have been looking at the *Triumph of Mordecai* (Bartsch 40, *ca.* 1641) as he etched the *Marché du boeuf gras*, or *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* (Bartsch 69, 1635) while etching *la Foire de Bezons*? In any case, the Baroque flavor and pictorial execution of these early etchings points to Rembrandt whose influence, always present, was to become even stronger in the darker manner that overtook much of French printmaking after 1760. At this point in his career, Saint-Aubin appears to reject all that French engraving of his own century had to offer. He seems as far from Fragonard's first work, *Saint Omphrius* of 1752(?),[12] as he is from the delicate and wonderfully controlled *Papilloneries humaines* (1748?) of his older brother, Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin.[13]

A year later, 1751, found Gabriel concerned with the typical production of his time, *Allégorie des mariages faits par la ville de Paris à la naissance du Duc de Bourgogne* (D.86-5, catalogue 4 & 5). Here Gabriel's heavy manner gave way to a lighter touch; the harsh blacks of the previous year disappeared; the figures are less agitated by some momentary event; and the skewed space has calmed into a gentle flow of clouds, *putti*, gods, and devices all set in front of a curved Temple of Venus. A constant, however, is Gabriel's tendency to merge forms, to allow the general flicker of light and the activity of dozens of participants to play in a space still curved by the temple, but at

least stabilized by the repeated verticals of the columns, a feature that will be strengthened in the following year in the *Reconciliation d'Absalon et de David* (D.10-7, catalogue 6). The ambitious tendencies of this new work are not so much in the elaborate setting, and certainly not in the relatively small number of figures. Here Gabriel attempted to cope with an historical subject whose monumental figures must express a specific moment in a narrative. But neither the figures nor the trappings have inspired our artist, just as the painting on which it was based had failed to convince the Academy jury that Gabriel was worthy of the Grand Prize in painting for 1752. Not only are the lines and areas coarse and disturbingly unintegrated, but the interaction of the figures is virtually void of conviction. Comparison with the same year's *Allégorie sur la convalesence du Dauphin* (D.72-9, catalogue 10 & 11), reveals that, at this point in his career, Gabriel's only sure manner for figural composition was through a painterly chiaroscuro which allowed forms to emerge from a nexus of shadings, flowing lights, and occasional calligraphic accents. In *David and Absalom* Saint-Aubin seems to be looking towards Italy, as well might an Academy student of historical painting. But the conventions of Italian Baroque and High Renaissance painting were simply foreign to Saint-Aubin's temperament. The articulation of large plastic figures in terms of bold rhetorical gesture was a remnant of a style of the past, one that neither suited nor interested our artist. Yet, in his effort to master such a theme, he did refer to other Italian formulas, and his etching contains something of the loose technique of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (1616-1670), himself influenced by Rembrandt.[14]

In all the etchings dated 1752 there is a new architectonic strength. Even in such an intimate subject as *les Nouvellistes*, the motions of the figures are rigorously supported by the numerous horizontal and vertical motifs of the interior decor. *Les Nouvellistes* is one of the few works in which Gabriel unexpectedly achieves a control of line, a conscious limitation of means that evades many of his other works. Most of the hatching (shading) is conditioned by the edges of the plate. What runs counter to this grid are precisely those passages which describe movement, texture, or particularly important accents of shadow. Unusual is the minute detail of the Rococo windows, not only fostering an atmosphere of coziness and warmth, but imparting a light gaiety that pervades the incidental events of the entire scene. As this is one of Gabriel's most successful works, it is not surprising to learn that he devoted considerable and patient effort toward bringing it to fruition and, equally important, avoided its destruction by limiting its reworkings. In its lightness of touch and distinctly French elegance can be seen the influence of the followers of Watteau, particularly Jacques-Gabriel Huquier (1695-1772)[15] whose *Chinoiseries* are even more delicate than those of Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin.

Although Gabriel's drawings show considerable oscillation between line and tone, they do not manifest contrasts as extreme as those which separate *les Nouvellistes* and the etching of the following year, 1753, *Laban cherchant ses dieux* (D.4-11, catalogue 14 & 15).[16] It is based on a painting which had failed to win the artist another sought-after prize, this time as a special privileged student at the Academy. Again the historical subject leads to an Italianate solution, not only in its rhetorical structure, but also in its adoption of faceted surfaces which recall the etchings of Federigo Barocci (1528-1612) or the early etchings of Gabriel's countryman, Jacques Bellange (1594-1638).[17] Nevertheless their mannerist logic and types were but weakly mirrored in Saint-Aubin's etching. The figures of Rebecca and Leah do suggest something of the attenuated planes of late-sixteenth-century Mannerism, but this formulation was dropped from Saint-

Aubin's subsequent work. *Laban* also provided technical as well as stylistic problems for our artist.[18] The heavy lines were not consistently bitten by the acid, as is evident in the back of Laban's man at the right, and even impressions were only obtained in pulls of the first state. Such a broad approach to the etched line recalling sketchier seventeenth-century etchers like Claude Vignon (1593-1670), was foreign to Gabriel's temperament and makes its final appearance in this work.[19] Henceforth, broad, tonal passages would result only from the expenditure of considerably greater energy and concentration. It is obvious from *Laban* that our artist suffered from a disorganized approach to etching, perhaps because he had never received adequate training, but more likely because of his impatient temperament. Saint-Aubin's search for a formula that would endow etching with instant responsiveness to every whim of the artist's hand and imagination was a challenge to the very essence of the medium.

The Goncourt brothers called *Vue du Salon du Louvre* (D.794-10, catalogue 12 & 13) "the little marvel of Gabriel and the etching par excellence of the 18th century."[20] Such praise is indeed merited by this wonderfully animated interior which is crammed into a space measuring about 5⅜ x 6⅞ inches. Our fascination is not really so much for the fifty or more figures who inhabit (somewhat sparsely!) the stairs and the gallery, but for the marvelous sense of interior space, of atmosphere, of moving light, for the seventy paintings which hang out from the walls, and for the flow and enjoyment of the spectators. Our experience is enhanced by that which Saint-Aubin does best, articulating the various gestures and costumes while holding the individual forms in a matrix of unifying lights and darks. One is never aware of the medium as a self-conscious device, but only as a remarkable source for so painterly an impression. The *Vue du Salon* carries forward the lessons of *les Nouvellistes* into the broader arena of Parisian society. The artist structures this complicated and decorative composition with the predominantly horizontal and vertical hatching of his interior. Thus the etched line serves a new level of integration: as descriptive drawing, as architecture, as light and shadow, and as a continuous reminder of the artist's hand.

In the following year, 1754, Gabriel executed only one plate, *les Quatre vases* (D.881-12, catalogue 16). The line is rapid and informal, entirely suited to this kind of sketch, one that recalls the fanciful but more disciplined etchings of Stefano della Bella (1610-1664).[21] The same approach characterizes the tiny subjects Gabriel rapidly inserted along the bottom of the plate. These parallel exactly the spirit of the little vignettes he drew by the thousands for sales and exhibition catalogues.

Saint-Aubin's lack of resolution shows most clearly in his portrait of the would-be assassin, *le Scérélat Damiens* (D.197-13, catalogue 17). Etched in 1757, this is a remarkably incisive and moody portrait for an artist who assiduously avoided penetrating beyond the exteriors of his subjects. Although there is no reason to doubt Gabriel's royalist sympathies, one wonders if, at times, he did not identify with those whose aim it was to challenge the established order, an order which, after all, had denied him his place in the Academy. What is so striking about this portrait is that one can see, for the first time, that our artist was capable of utilizing the needle or the burin in a most academic and disciplined manner. Passages in Damien's hair and jacket show a skill and engraver-like patience that one rarely encounters in these etchings. More in character, however, are the subsequent hatchings and slashings that destroyed the silvery tones, and imparted a gruff surface to the image. This alteration is not the work of one who fiddles with a perfect result, but the act of a temperament that has made a conscious choice about expression, namely that the content of a work of art should be inextricably

associated with its means. Although of small scale and not really well-printed, this etching succeeds in conveying the murky dissatisfaction and pride that lurk behind Damien's countenance. As a portrait it stands alone in its intensity, directness, and realism; no other print of the entire century approaches it.

There is no explanation as to why Gabriel etched so irregularly. Probably there was no market for the prints, and it seems quite obvious, as Dacier and others have maintained, that the etchings, like the drawings, were intended for friends or as personal amusement. Only in 1760 did Saint-Aubin again concentrate sufficiently to achieve a work of more than passing interest (we date *le Tombeau* considerably later than Dacier). The new work was the double plate entitled, *Spectacle des Tuileries* (D.539/540-18/19, catalogue 19-21). Here is Saint-Aubin at his best, displaying once again the teeming bustle of Parisian society enjoying itself out-of-doors. Like the strutting crowd of the earlier *Vue du Salon du Louvre*, an undercurrent of Callot pervades the countless number of tiny figures seated, strolling, and working under the trees, each devoting his attention to someone or something, the whole stage enclosed and overlooked by the two groups of statuary.[22] The first states, in particular, are flooded with sunlight, and the figures seem to float about in the warm space demarcated by the feathery backdrop of trees. Even the men pulling the watering cart appear to be taking part in a ballet rather than serving as beasts of burden. Gabriel's touch is here at its lightest, giving great play to the white of the paper. Yet all the activity is deftly ordered and quietly confined to a narrow stage that subtly recedes into the distance towards the left and right (or toward the center if the two scenes are joined so that the sculptures form a parenthetical enclosure at each side).

The same even and almost unaccented touch is found in the scenes from *Tancrède* (D.769-21, catalogue 22). In fact, all works of the early 1760s are marked by a newfound control which, in a work like *la Mort de Tancrède*, results in a higher degree of organization than Gabriel managed in earlier work such as the *Convalescence du Dauphin* (1752). This new clarity is found in the *Expulsion des Jésuites* of 1761 (D.176-23, catalogue 23 & 24). The entire image is exceedingly flat, even the pans of the scales have been turned parallel to the picture plane. The spaces of the roundels are deep but frontal, and merely act as a foil for the horizontal stages on which relatively symbolic action takes place. As in the other works of this time, the etched lines are fine, short, and oriented with respect to the platemark. There is very little of the harsh accenting that was the hallmark of many etchings of the 1750s. All this may reflect Gabriel's growing contact with book illustration and its fairly standardized tastes (possibly including the present etching and most assuredly the two plates for *Tancrède*, the *Frontispiece* for Sedaine's 1757 volume of poetry, and above all, the more ambitious involvement which probably began in 1760 with seven plates for Philippe de Pretot's *Abrégé de l'histoire romaine*[23]). An even greater degree of refinement characterizes *le Bal d'Auteuil* of 1761 (D.921-25, catalogue 25), another of Gabriel's triumphs of miniaturized gaiety. It was offered to the subscribers of a series of dance manuals and was, therefore, another work that felt a commercial influence. Vignettists like Hubert-Francois Gravelot (1699-1773), who produced much of his finest work in exactly the same decade, could not have been unknown to Saint-Aubin. The marvelous sense of activity that is packed into this tree-covered festival is as much a function of the increasing delicacy of the line as the choice of subject. As we know it—no simpler, early states exist—*le Bal d'Auteuil* reinstates the chiaroscuro missing from the first states of the *Spectacle des Tuileries*. In 1762 and 1763, when Gabriel turned again to these scenes

and extensively retouched them in drypoint, it was just this element he added.

It is my guess that Gabriel thought of selling his images of the fire at the *Foire Saint-Germain* (D.513-33, catalogue 26), recorded and etched within two days of the event (March 17, 1762). Once more we are left with an unfinished plate, one-sixth of which was reworked in the fall of 1762 (when he also worked on *Spectacle)*, but to no apparent end. Three other works of 1762 and 1763 were commissioned and successfully completed within the canons of the day. Yet, when Gabriel turned to a new allegory he again failed to finish what he had begun. This time it was his largest plate, *l'Allégorie sur l'érection de la statue de Louis XV* (D. 75-36, catalogue 27 & 28). The only decent impression from this shallowly bitten plate is one that had been completely retouched with pencil, pen, and wash (D.76). Was the plate abandoned because of its technical shortcomings, its absolute size (the completed composition called for many dozens of figures), or the failure, once more, of Gabriel's own attack? Could the fine manner of the early sixties serve so large a venture in the hands of this normally impatient artist? Close examination of the proofs in the exhibition clearly reveals that the basic compositional motifs had been sketched, but that the artist's concentration had failed. Various areas were handled with differing degrees of attention. In the second state, the inorganic character of the image is underscored by the contrast between the very mechanical hatching around the statue of Louis XV and the very sketchy treatment of its base. Similarly the figures in the sky manifest a higher order of consistency than their larger counterparts in the foreground. Only an enormous and patient effort could have welded this etching into a workable unity, the kind of reworking that Gabriel was able to bestow on the far smaller *Colère de Neptune* in 1767. With the failure of the large *Allégorie*, Gabriel's most mature period of etching came to an end.

There remains, however, a somewhat more loosely handled group of works dating from 1767 through 1776. *La Colère de Neptune* (D.813-39, catalogue 29 & 30) is an exceedingly modest but charming architectural sketch which represents the best of Saint-Aubin. It is far looser and considerably more restricted in its means than the works just examined. The new freedom gives rise to a chiaroscuro that flickers over the decorative figures. An even greater abstraction characterizes the touch of *le Tombeau* (D.828-15) which exists in a unique impression in Paris. Although Dacier dated *le Tombeau* to 1757, we feel that that it belongs with the later works.[24] It is too highly refined, its vocabulary of line too limited, its touch too feathery, and its subject too suggestive to belong with etchings of the fifties.[25] While the hatching in the sky is typically Saint-Aubin, that of the almost abstract foliage of the trees is not met with again. Such broadness is, however, typical of passages in the *Colère de Neptune* (especially the early state), the background of the *Théâtre Italien* (D.789-51, which Dacier also assigns to the very earliest period), and the superb *Conférence des avocats* of 1776 (D.445-48, two unique states in Paris). These later works correspond to the sfumato and breadth of the later drawings, especially those of interiors. Both etchings and drawings have a new surface sensuosity missing heretofore, one which recalls Rembrandt's finest works of mid-career, e.g., *Abraham and Isaac* of 1645 (Bartsch 34), and *The Angel Departing from the Family of Tobias* of 1641 (B.43). Gabriel cannot rival Rembrandt as a draughtsman or humanist, but his feeling for space, tone, and line is far closer to the Dutch master than to anything created in France at the time.

Saint-Aubin's final, full-fledged allegory was done several years earlier, in 1771; it, too, betrays the new sensibility for surface richness. Simultaneously, it flirts with the old bugaboo of over-elaboration on both the literary and visual levels, and, like a number of

earlier plates, it did not yield particularly ingratiating impressions. The Rosenwald proof of *Allégorie sur le mariage du Comte de Provence* (D.82-46, catalogue 31 & 32) has been subtly strengthened with washes in order to enhance its tonal unity. Even in this complex work, it is clear how much Saint-Aubin strove to integrate but not disguise the literal textures of the etched lines with the represented textures of his subjects.

III. Saint-Aubin's Approach to Etching

The sporadic, uncertain, and inorganic qualities attributed to Saint-Aubin's stylistic development are offered with at least one reservation. They are founded on the analysis of only a handful of works, fifty-two etchings created during a career that spanned more than thirty years. Nevertheless, parallel conclusions may be drawn from a detailed examination of the genesis of single works, namely a characteristic indecisiveness, an excess of means, and an unevenness of quality. This is not to deny that on several occasions Saint-Aubin was able to achieve a high degree of unity and expression in his etchings. In the following paragraphs we will briefly study the evidence of Gabriel's working process. This may be arrived at through the examination of preparatory drawings and through the analysis of the various states of single plates.

The rational, methodical Saint-Aubin seems always to have been at odds with the impulsive side of the artist. He was unable to part with a work, to declare it finished and cut himself off from it, like the hero of Balzac's *le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Of the thirty-two impressions in this exhibition, eleven represent heretofore unrecorded states or retouched proofs (nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19, 23, 25, and 31). Furthermore a very limited look at the etchings in several public collections turned up new states of at least four other subjects.[26] Considering Dacier's estimate that none of the purely etched works (that is, excluding those published after having been commercially reworked) exists in more than ten impressions,[27] one realizes how very personal was Saint-Aubin's relationship with his etched oeuvre. We have seen how he would leave plates unfinished, make devastating changes, undertake new and often unsuccessful approaches to the copperplate itself, and set about retouching many of the good proofs he had pulled. Peculiarly, he did not see fit to experiment with the printing of his plates or even to try the various tonal processes of his day (aquatint and mezzotint).[28] Rarely does one come across an impression with platetone (that is, a print pulled with ink left on the surface of the plate in order to impart gentle tonal accents).[29] Seldom did Saint-Aubin concern himself with the color of the printing ink (some of the darker works were pulled with warm black inks to soften their high contrast).[30] One is forced to the conclusion that, since it is both time-consuming and relatively boring, printing held little fascination for Saint-Aubin.

Dacier and Moureau have remarked that the states of Saint-Aubin's prints correspond to intervals of time rather than intervals in the creative process.[31] True, quite a number of both drawings and prints bear annotations which prove they were taken up after months or years had elapsed.[32] But the more states one finds, the more one is able to construct that other side of Gabriel, the one that did have the ability to work in a methodical fashion. The second states of each etching, *Márché de boeuf gras* and *Vue de la foire de Bezons*, manifest very pedestrian additions of hatching to darken specific areas, imparting greater depth, relief, and definition; in general, Saint-Aubin's reworkings are structural, virtually never altering our psychological response to action portrayed, or changing the character of one of the actors represented. Sometimes the alterations are rather heavy-handed, perhaps made with a burin as well as with the etching needle.

We have already hypothesized that the etching of Damiens was reworked in this fashion, even more brutally than the earlier works of 1750. On the other hand, the beautiful little *les Nouvellistes* tells us something quite different about Saint-Aubin. The two unknown states, published here for the first time, reveal a very delicate application of the image to the plate. The earlier leaves one in doubt whether the image was even etched; perhaps it is a drypoint so light that it lacks the usual burr, or perhaps it was a proof pulled from a still-grounded plate![33] Close examination shows, however, that much of the final image is indeed present. It is composed of a myriad of very subtle strokes (very different looking from the works of 1750) which evoke light and atmosphere throughout the intimate interior space. One even discovers that Gabriel was not opposed to burnishing areas, not only to clean the plate but also to obtain highlights. But it is the process of sharpening that is most interesting. The second and third states reveal the slow isolation and clarification of forms, particularly in the left background. Gradually contours are superimposed on the shadowy forms, hatching is added to give mass and to mask pentimenti, perspectival elements are laid down or reinforced, and the three-dimensionality of the room is made more convincing. Finally, as in many of Gabriel's works, the picture frame is augmented. What is typical of this whole operation is the gradual clarification of space and form by the act of drawing on top of already hatched-in areas. This process is very much the opposite of conventional procedures and tells us much about the ultimate intentions of the artist.

Some months later, in the *Vue du Salon du Louvre en l'année 1753*, Gabriel again coarsens his line and attacks his plate with a fairly extensive chiaroscuro, abandoning the sketchy method of *les Nouvellistes*. The unique first state of *Vue du Salon* shows a sunny interior in which a pattern of light and dark alternate over each figure. There are some disturbing striations across the plate which might have resulted from burnishing away a previous image, but were more likely caused by false biting (that is, by unwanted penetration of the acid through weaker parts of the etching ground). What we see are traces of the brushmarks left in the ground when it was applied to the plate. These have been lightened by burnishing in the second state, when the artist made a concerted effort to organize his lights and darks. In fact, this revision is the most detailed of any of the states remaining to us. The near walls on both sides have been darkened by fairly regular, but never unrelieved crosshatching; the paintings further along to the left have been lightened, and the back wall considerably darkened. At the same time Gabriel reinforced the corner at the bottom of the stairs. The largest and most obvious alteration was the addition of the large ellipse of shadow to the foreground; unfortunately, it is disturbingly hard, unlike other forms in the etching. The overall transformation of the second state is toward a more strongly structured interior. Not only has the sense of volume increased, but the eye travels over the etching with greater ease, pausing and continuing in measured steps of light and dark. The dappled pattern of the first state has been expanded into a broad chiaroscuro, not dramatic to be sure, but not unworthy, as Mrs. D'Oench notes, of the great Italian etcher who was just becoming known in Paris, Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). Except for little parcels of shading, we have not been able to detect any alteration of a single figure in this composition. Gabriel's deftness needed no revision. In his best works his personnages do just as the artist bids, invariably playing limited roles, but convincingly executed. Each figure of *Vue du Salon* is caught moving up or down the stairs, or in various postures of repose or attention on the railed floor above. This ability to render the moving figure is one of Saint-Aubin's great strengths. It is obvious from a study of the various states that his

instinct was sure and his hand certain when it came to composing his etchings. Only the light and space which were to orchestrate and contain his actors had to be adjusted. The only exception to this rule—and it is a minor one—appears in the second state of the *Charlatan* in which it was necessary to raise the height of the fence in order to lessen the competing attention drawn by the statue of Henri IV.

Virtually identical changes characterize the first and second states of *la Colère de Neptune* of 1767. The first state is light, rather abstract, and provides an even ground from which the figures emerge. The subsequent reworking strengthens the chiaroscuro and provides space through building up an abstract architectural setting (instead of the floral bower he indicated in the first state). This process of darkening structure and shadow continues through the last work, the fine *Conférence des avocats* of 1776. Here, Saint-Aubin's alterations are so deft that one is at pains to find them; suddenly the atmosphere has changed. It is as though someone had entered the room and simply drawn the blinds and turned up the lights. Gabriel's sensitivity to lighting characterizes his last years and drives home the point that he strove to integrate drawing with the mechanics of etching. What, in the hands of so many of his contemporaries, was a mechanical procedure was metamorphosed into a continuous process of drawing.

Spectacle des Tuileries (1760) underwent the most radical change of any of Saint-Aubin's plates. It is not too surprising that these alterations took place over intervals of two and three years! *Le Tonneau d'arrosage* was altered in 1762, *les Chaises* in 1763. The inscription on the latter reveals that Gabriel utilized the drypoint needle to darken his images, and this he did with considerable verve and concentration. Only an occasional detail is altered; for example, in *les Chaises* the figure near the little dog was burnished out, and in *le Tonneau* there are signs that Gabriel had begun to de-emphasize the figure at the extreme left. The meaningful revisions, however, were those that closed the space, removed all traces of an open horizon, and seemed to limit the suggestion of gaiety. The figures are now in relief against a fairly dark backdrop which itself has lost much of its delicacy and sunniness. What formerly were individual trees crowned with fine, light foliage, have now been blended together with long striations or obscured by opaque masses of fine drypoint burr. It is unlike Gabriel to dampen the mood of his works; one can only wonder whether some external event or artistic influence caused him to reconsider the outgoing, extroverted accomplishments of an earlier moment. A glance at the Chicago sketchbook (folio 7v) offers no conclusive help, for we cannot be sure that the drawing was in fact preparatory for the first state.[34] Most likely, it represents part of the process from which the print emerged. Nevertheless, the second states of the etchings seem closer to the drawing than do the first. The artist's intentions, in so far as the drawing reveals them, were certainly to create a more intimate scene than that conjured by the etching of 1760. The later revisions are not entirely in line with the drawing, although the broad hatching of the trees, the deeper shadows, and the attempt to limit the space are common to them both.

Unfortunately we do not have quite enough evidence about the role of drawings in the evolution of Gabriel's etchings. The three studies for the *Expulsion des Jésuites* (1761) seem unusually pedestrian in the step-by-step clarification of idea they demonstrate. But this is precisely what our artist was capable of when necessity or mood required. The Boston drawings are an unexpected confirmation of the observations already made with regard to the changes noted in the various states of the etchings. The first drawing is broad, as one would expect, a fine brush sketching the figures against a setting which was drawn in chalk and then reinforced with wash. There was no doubt in the artist's

mind about the actions of his figures, and the forms here established remain virtually unchanged throughout the creative process. In the first study, the artist proposed, rather cleverly, that the pans of the scales of justice should support the medallions that depict the punitive acts visited on the Jesuits (the burning of their books and the closing of their schools).

The second drawing has opted against this solution (it would not only have obscured the scenes, but would have intruded another spatial dimension—the foreshortened pans—into the complicated scheme).[85] This new sketch was executed in pen over chalk, and it concentrates on the settings within the medallions deepening the flight of stairs and trying out a complicated doorway for the right-hand scene. In it, the difficult figure of the recoiling Jesuit in the left-hand scene took final form. The pen was used much as Saint-Aubin utilized the etching needle in the second and third states of *les Nouvellistes*, to sharpen structure, and to isolate significant forms whose basics had been pretty much established from the start.

The final drawing was executed on the verso of the second, and its direction was reversed—opposite to that of the etching.[86] Quite obviously it was traced through in pencil and then worked up with pen and wash. Details are lacking for they would be worked in during the process of drawing on the plate. The spaces have again undergone some adjustments in order to provide the eye of the spectator with a series of accents. On the stairs groups of people appear, and in the doorway a figure or two rush out of the school. The larger doorway of the first sketch is brought back. The deep space, displaying no trace of the curvilinear elements of the earlier etchings, is totally centralized; in the etching, it is articulated in terms of wavy horizontal and vertical lines that coincide with the rhythms of the outer frame. In the rare first state from the de Goncourt collection, Saint-Aubin has indicated with wash those passages that he wished the engraver to darken. Dacier's conclusion that a professional engraver finished off the entire plate seems entirely correct. Luckily, the added passages are entirely unobtrusive and executed in terms consonant with Gabriel's own. As we pointed out earlier, this work must have been planned for commercial publication. Thus it is not so surprising that Saint-Aubin went through the orderly process of preparation represented by the three drawings and the touched early state in Boston. If the end result is somewhat on the dry side, it nonetheless reveals Gabriel's capacity for disciplined work.

IV. Conclusions

In no sense are the foregoing remarks more than opening paragraphs in what must someday be a full-fledged re-evaluation of the achievement of Saint-Aubin. It is still too early to reconstruct the precise influences of other artists, contemporary events, and personal experience on Saint-Aubin's art. We have, however, attempted to draw a convincing picture of his relationship to etching, albeit through a selected group of works. The unpredictability and inconsistency of the man stands above all else. But in one sense he was steadfast, and that was in his attempt to preserve the freshness and integrity of etching. His approaches to his goal were varied and one cannot easily find a pattern of development.

By and large there appears to be a gradual refinement of Gabriel's means, and a decided withdrawal from an overly Baroque handling of line, space, and subject. Undoubtedly these changes reflect his withdrawal from the Academy, but these seem to be innate preferences that were simply reinforced by external events. There came a point in the 1760s when Gabriel reached his peak as an organized and detailed

draughtsman and etcher. This point probably coincided with his activity as book illustrator. This is not to imply that Gabriel designed—much less etched—many plates for publication. But we must acknowledge that we are not clear about the extent of his commercial involvement. The later works have their shortcomings but exhibit a kind of encrusted or abstract breadth that—though not really deserving of the label *"Alterstil"*—confirms the goals he had set for his graphic work throughout his life. These goals never included the kind of detailed control of line that characterized the best work on copper of his day, whether in the dramatic deep etching of a Piranesi, the luminosity of a Canaletto, the delicacy of Fragonard, the perfect tonal control of Moreau-le-Jeune, the documentary inventiveness of Charles-Nicholas Cochin fils, or the picturesqueness of the gifted amateur, Richard, Abbé de Saint-Non. In a sense, he wanted to be free from conventions, and his efforts bear witness to the continuous vacillation among various systems of laying down his line. Basically, he strove to unite drawing with etching, to achieve on copper something like the tonal richness and calligraphic freedom of crayon and wash. Rarely do his works display the fascination with system that was so typical of Mannerist works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Never did he attempt that bravura style of optical etching that was practiced in Italy during the eighteenth century. The undisciplined quality of Saint-Aubin's etchings was not merely the product of his own uncertainty, but reflected his attachment to the evanescent aspects of nature and society and to the spontaneous freedom of his own drawings. Thus his love of detail, so often verging on the uncontrollable, fed his desire to activate every square inch of the copperplate with movement of form, light, and line. Although he had failed as a painter, it was still the painter's instinct that Gabriel restored to etching; to give in to any mechanical form of procedure would have been a betrayal.

His efforts were directed toward the preservation of pictorial tonality. The average engraver began with a fairly light, line etching (often executed by another artist), and superimposed a progressively impersonal layer of tonal and textural hatching.[37] Saint-Aubin, on the other hand, began with a generalized image and worked to organize and refine its over-all chiaroscuro, and to sharpen the space in which the main motifs were set. He was more concerned with atmosphere and light than with contour and detail. His avoidance of system, his insistence on looseness of line countered the tendency of the eighteenth century to literally rule out and bury spontaneous drawing. Their efforts were directed toward creating an analogue of the anonymous finish of a well-executed painting. Gabriel preserved the under-drawing, so to speak, of the early states and thus inverted the normal etching procedure of his day. He began with tone and continued to draw with line and tone from state to state in such a way that the essential quality of the drawn line was never compromised or subsumed into an overall optical or reproductive surface. It was this spontaneity and his dedication to public phenomena that was Gabriel's legacy to the nineteenth century. One need only reflect on the little drypoint inscription of the *Allégorie sur le mariage du Comte de Provence:* "épreuve dans le goût d'un dessin à la plume."

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Figure 3:
Théâtre Italien (not in exhibition)
Etching, ca. 1770
152 x 111 mm.
Dacier 789-51, state prior to Dacier's first
Collection: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939

SAINT-AUBIN AS DRAUGHTSMAN

"The art of drawing was born of a sensation which men at all times have felt in the presence of the picture of the universe; it results from the homage and respect which we render to nature and her creations. Nothing was so natural to man as to attempt to trace for the eyes of his fellow men a clear image of the objects which have affected him. He did this either to perpetuate the memory of men whom he regarded as his own benefactors, or the benefactors of mankind, or to transmit to posterity events and interesting scenes which the accidents of time, place, manner, religion, dress and the nature of the climate vary in so many differing ways."[1]

The authors might have been describing Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's art, so close is the parallel between their observations and his work. All too often Saint-Aubin is named among the *petits-maîtres* of his time, a group of artists who were usually draughtsmen rather than painters, and who customarily worked on a small scale. More often than not, they were concerned with the design of illustrations, precious objects, or commemorative projects rather than with the more prestigious themes of history, mythology or portraiture. Such a restricted classification of Saint-Aubin fails to define the unique character of his drawings: their uncanny ability to evoke the daily life of Paris and its environs, to commemorate a civic event, to record in thumbnail sketches of remarkable accuracy the works of art which he saw in private collections and auction rooms, or to comment on then-popular topics in allegories, the allusions of which sometimes escape us today. The sum is a rich view of Parisian eighteenth-century life prior to the Revolution when social values and intellectual concerns were in a state of flux.

One need only peruse the index of Émile Dacier's *Catalogue raisonné* to sense the enormous documentary value of Saint-Aubin's work. He recorded contemporary events by the hundreds, and it was for this reason that Dacier arranged his catalogue by subject rather than chronologically. Unfortunately this approach has tended to overshadow our understanding of the artist's development and to obscure other questions as well. One also suspects that, in the final analysis, Dacier's preference for archival research hindered him from drawing significant conclusions from his incomparable fund of knowledge. A number of securely dated drawings, several unknown to Dacier, are now in American collections. A study of them, together with more familiar sheets, provides some touchstones upon which to construct a preliminary chronology, a basic step in the eventual reassessment of the artist.

In his *Recueil de Plantes* Charles-Germain, Gabriel's elder brother, preserved the family's history. His lines about Gabriel note that the artist studied with "Sarrazin" (probably Jean-Baptiste, a professor at the *Académie de Saint-Luc*), Étienne Jeurat and François Boucher. We now can only guess at the program of instruction Gabriel received since none of his student work has ever been identified. Certainly he would have been taught the art of drawing as a prerequisite skill for his initial ambition to become a painter. The section on "Figure Drawing" in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, from which the opening quotation of this essay is taken, provides an indication of the methodology and theory which informed the instruction of an art student at this time. The introduction, probably Diderot's contribution, stresses man's instinctive desire to record pictorially the events and customs which shape his existence. Since mastery of the ability to draw the human form was essential for the artist, Diderot includes a course of drawing illustrated with engraved plates. The discussion proceeds from a description

of the artist's materials and equipment to illustrations of proportion. Once the beginner has mastered the proportional relationships between parts of the body, he may then move on to detail-by-detail mastery of anatomy. Finally the details are combined into a full length figure or *académie*. Before an artist can work from nature he must have mastered perspective, anatomy and have studied from the antique. The latter would allow the artist to judge by ideal standards the imperfections to be found in nature, which he could then correct as necessary. Cochin and Diderot's pedagogy is a summary of mid-century drawing instruction which, in all probability, fairly describes Saint-Aubin's earliest training.

It was not until 1747 that Gabriel's name first appeared in print. Then, he is mentioned as a teacher in Jacques-François Blondel's *École des Arts*. From Blondel's brochure describing his school, it is clear that the courses encompassed more than a study of the fine arts as we would understand the phrase today. Lessons in architecture, mathematics, the theory of fortifications, modelling, and stone cutting were part of the curriculum. At Blondel's academy, Saint-Aubin not only taught the "principles and proportions" of the human figure but also provided instruction in matters relating to the proper attributes for allegories, the design of fêtes, and public celebrations. The latter were lucrative employment for artists, since various royal entertainments as well as civic ceremonies were lavishly financed by the *Menus Plaisirs*, a branch of the government charged with arranging the floats, backdrops and other decorations for these events. Blondel's curriculum surprises us less when seen as a preparation for this kind of work.

Among the earliest drawings by Gabriel is a design for a fireworks display held in 1747 (catalogue 33). At first the attribution to Saint-Aubin is rather surprising because of the exact, rather dry rendering of the architecture. Upon reflection, though, this is just the quality required in a design which other workmen must follow. One does sense Gabriel's hand in the allegorical figures which enliven the construction. Their slender, tapering limbs follow the example of vignettists such as Gravelot or Cochin rather than the principles of the *Encyclopédie*. The only drawing known to Dacier from this year was the *Allégorie sur la "Concours" de l'Académie en 1747* (Dacier 71; repro. pl. III), not a very dependable example of the artist's early drawing style since he reworked the sheet twenty years later.

That Saint-Aubin could dispense with vignette prototypes and create large-scale figures alive with vigor is brilliantly shown by his *Momus* (catalogue 34), also unknown to Dacier. Drawn with the *trois crayons* favored by Watteau and early Boucher, Saint-Aubin's figure has a tactile presence rarely met with in the artist's work. Had Gabriel been able—or have wanted—to develop this manner, he could never have been so summarily classified as a *petit-maître*. But in 1752, when he drew *Momus*, Gabriel de Saint-Aubin was rejected in the competition for the *Prix de Rome*. He tried again the following year, and made a final attempt in 1754. How crushed Saint-Aubin was by these defeats can be judged from Charles-Germain's comment that "unjust preference" made his brother abandon all hope of the prize, and with it a successful career as a painter.

Undoubtedly the poet-playwright Michel-Jean Sedaine's counsels were closer to the mark when (in his *Recueil de Poésies* published in 1761), he advised his friend to forget the heroes of antiquity, along with the gods of history and mythology. Not only did the playwright realize that Saint-Aubin's talent was for lighter themes as popularized by Boucher's *sujets galantes*, for example, but further understood that Saint-Aubin's

drawings best expressed his truly remarkable ability to seize an expressive gesture or capture the movement and atmosphere of a crowded scene. The image which appears instantly from the action of crayon, pen or brush upon paper must have been gratifying to Saint-Aubin whose unstable temperament made him impatient with the tedious process of etching copper plates. Sedaine may have been aware that, as a painter, Saint-Aubin went to the opposite extreme, reworking his canvases until they became unintelligible accretions of change and indecision. Hence the poet's admonition to draw *"... une esquisse légère / Sur ce carré de papier blanc...."*[2]

If a career within the *Académie Royale* was closed to Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, one may then ask what alternatives were possible. We know that he continued to teach at Blondel's academy until at least 1764, and from 1774 until 1776 was an officer of the *Académie de Saint-Luc.*[3] Dacier's characterization of the artist-members of the latter school as "independant, undisciplined and discontent" reads like an overstatement made for literary effect, although certainly the *Académie de Saint-Luc* was not enveloped by the same accumulation of traditions as the *Académie Royale.*

Aside from the scant evidence of Saint-Aubin's teaching, it is in his work that additional clues about his activities may be found. Contemporary engravings after Gabriel's work are most numerous from 1760-1771. Dacier catalogued sixteen dated prints published during these eleven years, from a total of twenty-four subjects known to have appeared in the artist's lifetime.[4] This does not take into account the undated prints which were executed before the artist's death in 1780. Although these are not impressively large figures, they do indicate that during the 1760's the artist's paintings, book illustrations or vignette designs were more widely publicized through reproductive prints than at any other time. Slightly over half the artist's projects for book illustrations date from the same eleven years.[5]

Whether published or not, the seventy-one illustrations executed between 1760-1771 indicate one of the means by which Saint-Aubin tried to earn a living during the middle period of his life. The drawings in the present exhibition which were designed as illustrations to specific texts (catalogue 44, 50 and 51) show the artist at ease within the small format customarily used in the eighteenth century. The two drawings based on incidents from Sedaine's plays demonstrate how readily Saint-Aubin adapted the theatre's conventions for expressing emotion to his own needs as an illustrator, while the mortuary symbols used in the alternative designs for a surround to a portrait of Edward Young are so apposite that one must assume a bond of empathy existed between the artist and the English author.

One would like to know whether Saint-Aubin ever tried to sell his meticulously finished watercolors, such as the 1761 view of a performance of Lully's *Armide* (catalogue 43), a delightful evocation of a Parisian audience seeing and being seen at one of the season's most fashionable entertainments. The sheer variety of incident and characterization (many of the figures are miniature caricatures) is so exceptional as to suggest that Saint-Aubin had a client in mind. His *Salon du Louvre en 1767* (Dacier 797, pl. XXIX), a panoramic view of the paintings and sculpture on exhibition, is even more crowded than *Armide* with meticulously detailed notations. Both watercolors remain in focus by virtue of a sensitive manipulation of chiaroscuro to unify the multitude of references in each work. Perhaps Saint-Aubin hoped to find purchasers for these large scale drawings, following the example of Louis Moreau l'Aîné or Hubert Robert. If so, apparently he was unsuccessful since works like his *Armide* or the *Salon du Louvre en 1767* are as rare today as his paintings.

The above paragraphs have tried to show that if Saint-Aubin was bitter over his loss of the *Prix de Rome*, he nonetheless made an attempt to adapt his ambitions to the options which were available, and even met with some small success during the 1760s. But within an industrious, productive family of artists like the Saint-Aubins, Gabriel's occasional sales or commissions must have seemed paltry indeed, if Charles-Germain's affectionate biography of his brother, emphasizing the "farouche" side of his personality, is any evidence of family sentiment. More to the point is Gabriel's own disillusioned evaluation of his career as he turned forty, expressed in a poem filled with autobiographical references.[6] Immediately preceding this poem is another dedicated to the Marquis de Marigny, brother of Mme. de Pompadour, thanking him for a favor or commission which Saint-Aubin could not accept because he was not a member of the *Académie Royale*. His lack of official position kept the artist at a remove from the lucrative commissions ordered by Louis XV's confidant and her brother.

By the end of the 1760s a reaction against the rococo style had begun to make itself felt in fashionable circles. In 1773 the Comtesse du Barry rejected Fragonard's panels *The Progress of Love*, today in the Frick Collection, New York, in favor of a suite of paintings by Vien.[7] We can only surmise to what extent this shift in taste affected Saint-Aubin. A detailed examination of his *Allegory on the Death of François Boucher* (catalogue 52) raises several questions in this context. Boucher, whose art is the apotheosis of the rococo style, had died three years earlier, in 1770. Why then should his former student wait so long to commemorate his death? Looking closely at the octagonal canvas resting against the studio wall at the right, it is at once apparent that the painting could not be Boucher's, as one might expect in a composition dedicated to that artist. Rather, the canvas is in the newly modish neo-classic taste, showing a putto touching the wings of a statue resting on a severe classical pedestal. The putto looks out of the painting towards one of the graces who points to the portrait medallion of Boucher. In our opinion, the actual subject of the watercolor is an allegorical reference to the change in taste which began to make itself felt at this time. Thus Saint-Aubin is not so much eulogizing his former teacher as he is commenting on the rise of a style antipathetical to that represented by Boucher's art.

There is a strikingly unexpected development in Saint-Aubin's later work which is difficult to explain. He became increasingly obsessed by vast spaces filled with dramatic oppositions of light and shadow. Figures are reduced to a few centimeters in height, although they remain remarkably full of character. The *Cours du Chemiste Sage* (catalogue 57) is a late synthesis of figures and architecture using atmospheric light to unify the scene. Gabriel's earlier watercolors of stage performances sometimes exhibit a similar fascination with perspective and tricks of lighting (catalogue 40 and 43), but they are always basically concerned with the performance taking place. Nothing really anticipates the artist's late drawings where architecture reduces to insignificance the figures which have the power to conceive and erect these monuments (catalogue 56). Coincident with these late drawings, the artist continued to fill his notebooks with studies of Parisian life as he found it going on about him (catalogue 57). The late sketchbook pages do not evidence any development in Saint-Aubin's drawing style which, in itself, would allow one to date them. Fortunately he continued to record on many studies the date, location or whatever else fascinated him about the scene.

Most of the artist's annotated sales catalogues also originate from the last decade of his life. Dacier knew only four sales catalogues from 1755-1769, although between 1772-1779 he catalogued twenty-three.[8] The three recently discovered volumes

exhibited here (catalogue 60-62) are from a group of five first noted by Pierre Rosenberg.[9] They reinforce the assumption that Saint-Aubin, during the later years of his life, spent more time than previously in the auction rooms. It also appears that from time to time he executed illustrated catalogues on commission. A volume in the Wrightsman Collection, New York, is annotated with such unusual neatness that one must assume it was intended for someone other than the artist whose own catalogues are filled helter-skelter with notes and commentary.[10] Lending credence to this assumption is Grimm's recollection that at the sale of the Duc de Choiseul's collection in 1772 he saw an unnamed artist, certainly Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, who was sketching in the margins of his catalogue the works to be auctioned. Grimm asked whether the draughtsman would execute another illustrated volume and was quoted a price.[11] This evidence of Saint-Aubin's increased attendance at auctions during the 1770s may be simply the result of the chance survival of these volumes. But the declining interest in rococo art, which we believe the artist alludes to in his *Allegory on The Death of Boucher*, certainly meant still less demand for Gabriel's own work. Although we have only scant evidence of how Saint-Aubin earned a living at any point in his life, his increasing preoccupation with the auction room makes one wonder if he did not try to increase his income by acting as an agent in sales from time to time. One of his rare late commissions is a small volume ornamented with watercolors ordered in 1775 by an army officer Desbans, who presented the book to Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. The text is a plea that Desbans receive the promotion in rank promised to him several years earlier.[12] But these commissions are rare exceptions to the general indifference towards his work during the 1770s.

The inventory of the artist's possessions made after his death on February 9, 1780 confirms Saint-Aubin's lack of recognition.[13] His effects were meagre: a few necessary pieces of furniture and cooking utensils, some musical instruments, several changes of clothes. There were eighty paintings, three hundred drawings – "tous esquisses" – with more in drawers and cupboards, the contents of which were not itemized. In addition to a portfolio containing about one hundred etchings, there were a hundred and forty volumes the margins of which were covered with drawings. Later, Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin estimated that his brother made, in all, some four to five thousand drawings.

Such a vast pictorial record centered on life in and around Paris calls to mind a parallel with Daumier. Both artists lived at a time when accepted social and political values were being questioned, and in Daumier's case actively challenged. The comparison ends abruptly. Saint-Aubin never allows us to participate through his art in the moral issues which stirred the inhabitants of the capital. Nor do we see the coarse, vulgar side of eighteenth-century life which we know from other sources. In the end, Saint-Aubin's art lacks the humanitarian scope of Daumier's vision. There is always a reticent quality which veils Gabriel's personality. These enchanting vignettes may contain allusions or allegorical trains of thought which we despair of unravelling.

The forces which shaped Saint-Aubin's draughtsmanship are in large measure lost to us. At the outset, he depended on the example of vignette designers such as Cochin or Gravelot for the piquant figures which enlivened his drawings (catalogue 33 and 34). From the same period is his large-scale *Momus* (catalogue 35), drawn with a vigor and breadth which prove his mastery of Jeaurat and Boucher's lessons. The glancing reference to Boucher in Saint-Aubin's 1757 study for *la Conversation galante* (catalogue 37) is a rare clue to the artist's source of inspiration, but tells us nothing we might not expect. Although Saint-Aubin's sales catalogues are filled with his scribblings, the

matters referred to most often are questions of attribution or condition. We would like to have some indications of his own preferences, a curious gap in the personality of an artist who spent so much time recording the passage of works of art through the auction rooms and private collections of Paris. The artist's mature drawings are as free of traceable influences as his etchings, although his sensitivity to the expressive potential of the draughtsman's materials is very much part of a shared contemporary sensibility. His incisive pen or chalk line, his vaporous, suggestive use of wash, and his scintillating combination of watercolor and gouache are qualities mastered by a goodly number of French eighteenth-century artists. Saint-Aubin's unique contribution to the draughtsmanship of his time was his ability to capture an evanescent sensation, to arrest for a moment the movement of a figure or the passage of a beam of light. He can condense onto the small format of a sketchbook page the excited response of a crowd to the latest spectacle or evoke the changing atmosphere of Paris as he wandered through its streets, drawing "all the time and everywhere," to use Charles-Germain's phrase. His watercolors detail popular entertainments, courtly festivities or important civic occasions with a passion for accuracy and, occasionally, wry amusement. His picture chronicle of Paris is unique. Saint-Aubin's works are, in sum, a view of Parisian life which is given breadth and texture by the artist's genius as a draughtsman.

Victor Carlson
Curator of Prints and Drawings
The Baltimore Museum of Art

CATALOGUE OF PRINTS

NOTE TO THE CATALOGUE

The fact that Dacier authored two catalogues, that of 1914 devoted only to the prints, and that of 1931 which covers works in all media, has complicated our task. The Dacier references first give the number to be found in the 1931 catalogue; in the case of the prints, it is followed by the number of the 1914 catalogue. The order in which the prints and drawings have been catalogued is chronological. We have followed titles that are in common use; thus all print titles are in French; most of the drawings that were unknown to Dacier now have English titles. As usual, height precedes width; normally we have measured the platemark (for etchings) and the sheet (for drawings). We have not attempted to assign new state numbers; this must await a total reworking of Dacier's catalogue.

1. LA JEUNE FEMME À LA TERRASSE.

Etching, undated
72 x 100 mm. (image)
Inscribed below: *de Saint aubin invenit et Sculpsit*
Dacier 341 (52)
One state known to Dacier

Of the two known impressions, Dacier had seen neither, and knew only of that now in the Rosenwald Collection. The other example belongs to the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and shows two subjects. To the left of the *Femme à la terrasse* is a seated couple with a bulldog! The dividing line between the two scenes is a tree, but a heavy, ruled line has also been engraved between the two subjects. Although neither impression is particularly good, close inspection does indicate that these are probably identical states despite the almost complete absence of the tree and landscape from the Rosenwald impression. Further, it appears unlikely the plate had been cut down before this impression was pulled, for a trace of the platemark underlies the entire bottom of the little scrap of paper.

1. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Only state
72 x 59 mm. (image)
A rather poor impression in black ink on yellowed laid paper; no watermark
Collection: Atherton Curtis

2. MARCHÉ DU BOEUF GRAS

Etching, 1750
138 x 169 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *gabriel de S^t^ aubin f.*
lower center: *MARCHE DU BOEUF GRAS*
lower left in image: *1750*
Dacier 645 (1)

Dacier describes two states and an unseen impression, formerly in the collection of Prosper de Baudicour, inscribed *"retouché le 3 janvier 1755;"* the significance of this inscription is uncertain, i.e., whether it signals a reworked plate or an impression with handmade additions.

In former times, the butchers of most French towns sponsored a colorful procession of a fattened ox *(le boeuf gras)*. It was held just at the beginning of Lent (Shrove Thursday) and probably marked the survival of a pagan tradition of spring rites and sacrifice. The butchers dressed as Turkish slaves and the ox itself was fancifully attired. Riding atop the ox was a crowned child holding a scepter, the *roy* or king of the community. The little parade meandered through the streets, led by mounted trumpets and tambourines. Saint-Aubin's etching is quite surely an accurate account of what took place in Paris in 1750.

2. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939.
Between Dacier's first and second states; after numerous areas of cross-hatching added to strengthen shadows, but before horizontal and vertical hachures around border at sides and top
139 x 170 mm.
Printed in warm black ink on slightly rough, medium weight, laid paper; no watermark

3. VUE DE LA FOIRE DE BEZONS
Etching, 1750
140 x 158 mm.
Inscribed in second state lower left: *1750./gabriel de S^t^ aubin pinx.*
lower center: *VUE DE LA FOIRE DE BESON près paris*
Dacier 592 (2)

Dacier had seen only two states in 1914; in 1931, a possible third state was suggested by Löys Delteil; unfortunately this may have been caused by the reproduction in Dacier's 1914 publication which is of the first, not the second, state. Probably after a lost painting or gouache.

The Bezons Fair took place on the Sunday closest to the feast day of Saint Fiacre, and marked, of course, a great celebration for all those concerned with the carriage trade. Bezons was a small community a bit further from Paris than the Champs-Elysées. The festival was marked by balls, costumes, and merry-go-rounds.

3. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Dacier's second state, with considerable hatching added to the foreground, the shadow below and the space above the dog, the sky, etc.
141 x 164 mm.
A rich impression printed in black ink on good, laid paper; watermark: row of letters
Collections: Henri Beraldi; Marcel Mirault

4.-5. ALLÉGORIE DES MARIAGES FAITS PAR LA VILLE DE PARIS À LA NAISSANCE DU DUC DE BOURGOGNE

Etching, 1751
168 x 129 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *n° 600. Dot. 300l.*
lower right (in final state): *G. de S^t Aubin fecit*
lower center: *ALLÉGORIE DES MARIAGES FAITS PAR LA VILLE / de paris. á la naissance de mgr le duc de bourgogne en 1751*
Dacier 86 (5)
Three states known to Dacier

Dacier catalogues one drawing (D.85), 350 x 250 mm., quite close to the print. Leporini (1931) has published a closer study for the figure of Hymen, in reverse.

To celebrate the birth of his grandson, the Duc de Bourgogne, Louis XV provided 300 livres each for the dowries of 600 of the less fortunate girls of Paris (thus the numbers at the lower left of the etching). The marriages took place on Tuesday, November 9, 1751, at most of the larger churches of the city. In Saint-Aubin's allegory, Venus and one or two other gods are seated at the upper right beneath a portrait of the young Duke which is carried in the sky by a host of putti. She is overseeing the transfer of gold coins from the City of Paris to the winged god of marriage, Hymen. Around the base of this floating entourage, hovers another host of putti who are all lighting their torches from that held by Hymen. In the background to the right may be seen the Pont-Neuf and Notre-Dame.

4. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Second state; the signature reads *G. de S^t Aubin invenit.*; with new cross-hatching on the base and steps around the near column at the left; with horizontal hatching in most of the background spaces between the columns.
169 x 127/8 mm.
Retouched in pen and pencil, apparently in 1766
Inscribed in ink below: *Allégorie des Ecoles gratuites de Dessein établies de Paris à la sollicitation de M. Rochellier, adjoint au Professeur a l'Academie R. 1766*
Printed in black ink on fairly light, but not fine, laid paper; no watermark

5. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Katherine Eliot Bullard Fund
Between Dacier's second and third states; all the spaces between the columns have now received shading; there are some additional hatchings in the clouds beneath the portrait of the Duke; before the signature changed
169 x 126/8 mm.
Printed in warm black ink on rather coarse, laid paper; no watermark

6. RÉCONCILIATION D'ABSALON ET DE DAVID

Etching, 1752
158 x 212 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *gabriel de S^t aubin. 1752*
lower center: *RECONCILIATION D'ABSALON ET DE DAVID*
Dacier 10 (7)
Two states described by Dacier; a state prior to Dacier's first exists in the Bibliothèque

Nationale, Paris. The far doorway is devoid of shading, and several decorative accents are missing from areas at the lower left.

An oil painting (D.9), which has disappeared, served as prototype for the etching; the subject was assigned to those competing for the Grand Prix in painting.

The reconciliation between King David and his son, Absalom, marked David's forgiveness of Absalom's murder of his brother Amnon. Amnon, David's eldest, had dishonored his half-sister, Tamar. At first Absalom's revenge had not been accepted by David. Joab, one of the King's advisors, finally schemed to force the King to perceive the injustice of his intransigent attitude toward Absalom. The story is related in 2 Samuel 14.

6. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Dacier's first state; before the title and completion of the borders
160 x 213
Possibly touched with Chinese white at left
Printed in warm black ink on fine, laid paper; no watermark
Collections: Robert-Dumesnil; Atherton Curtis

7.-9. LES NOUVELLISTES

Etching, 1752
100 x 146 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *gabriel de S^t aubin inv. 1752*
lower center: *LES NOUVELLISTES*
Dacier 518 (8)

Dacier knew of only one state, but at least two earlier states are described in the following entries.

7. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939
Early state, before either that described by Dacier or that of the following impression; before the image was reduced and prior to completion of many areas, including the table at the left
103 x 135 mm. (sheet, with platemark visible at top, bottom, and right)
Trial proof, unevenly inked in warm black; on light, moderately fine, laid paper; no watermark.

8. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939
Early state, prior to Dacier's only state but subsequent to the preceding impression; bottom area burnished for border and signature; many strong contours and areas of shading have been added as the artist etches what may have been little more than a scratched drawing on copper
102 x 147 mm.
Printed in black ink, on light, mediocre, laid paper; no watermark

9. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Katherine Eliot Bullard Fund
Probably a third state (the only state described by Dacier; see the two preceding entries)
101 x 145 mm.
A rich impression printed in brown-black ink on a medium laid paper; no watermark

10.-11. ALLÉGORIE SUR LA CONVALESCENCE DU DAUPHIN

Etching, 1752
113 x 135 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *g. de S^t aubin*
lower right: *1752*
below: *La france rend grâce à Esculape de la guérison de Mgneur le Dauphin / Ce prince paroit appuyé Sur la force et Sur la prudence qué luy fait remarquer la joye du peuple qu'on / apperçoit dans l'éloignement. Sur les nues, le génie tutélaire du royaume chasse atropos qui abandonne son fatal ciseau. / le Signe de la vierge qu'on decouvre dans le zodiaque, indique le mois de cette / heureuse convalescence, à côté d'esculape est un livre ouvert dans le quel on lit / les noms des savants médecins qui ont veillés sur les jours du prince, et vers le / bas du tableau les amours parent de fleurs les armes de l'héritier de la monarchie.*
Dacier 72 (9)
Two states

The Dauphin, Louis de France (1729-1765), was stricken in August of 1752, probably with chicken pox. He recovered in two weeks, having been bled several times. A Te Deum mass was sung on the twenty-seventh as an offer of thanks for the Dauphin's recovery. In the etching, the Dauphin, supported by Strength and Prudence, appears to a joyous public. To the left, the genius of the royal house rousts a wiley spirit who abandons his fatal chisel. The sign of the Virgin in the heavens indicates the month of August. In the lap of the personification of the wise doctor, Aesculapius, is a book inscribed with the names of the doctors who attended the Dauphin (De Senac, Du Moulin, and P. Ponce).

10. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939
First State
114 x 135 mm.
Printed a bit lightly in slightly warm black ink on a moderately fine, medium weight, laid paper; no watermark

11. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Smith Kline and French Foundation Fund
Second state, with crosshatching added to the shadow cast by the balustrade on the stairs, to the right-hand column, etc.; with oblique hatching on the pilaster above the Dauphin's head and, in general, all of the shadows strengthened and second border line added at right and top
113 x 135 mm. with wide margins
Good, black impression on medium coarse paper; no watermark
Collection: de Goncourt

12.-13. VUE DU SALON DU LOUVRE EN 1753

Etching, 1753
145 x 176 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *gabriel de S^t aubin*
below (third state): *VUE DU SALON DU LOUVRE EN LANNÉE 1753*
Dacier 794 (10)

Three states known to Dacier; a final state was signaled by Prosper de Baudicour, but neither Dacier nor the present cataloguer has seen this version which is dated MDVII.LXVII (1767?).

Dacier describes a drawing (D.793) in chalks and China ink, in the same direction as the etching.

The supposedly annual Salon provided an opportunity for the members of the *Académie royale* to exhibit their works.

12. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
First state; before the incorporation of the large shadow that spreads over most of the foreground; before crosshatching on the rear wall, etc.; the title bears the date, '1753.' In this state, earlier work (and perhaps some burnishing) not noted by Dacier is visible.
145 x 177 mm.
Retouched with gray wash; pencil inscription on verso
Printed in black ink on rather thin, moderate quality, laid paper; no watermark
Collection: Henri Thomas

13. Cincinnati Art Museum. Bequest of Herbert Greer French
Second state, with addition of large foreground shadow, and a reworking of the chiaroscuro of the entire print
147 x 177 mm.
Printed in black ink on laid paper; no watermark
Collections: Henri Beraldi; Marcel Mirault

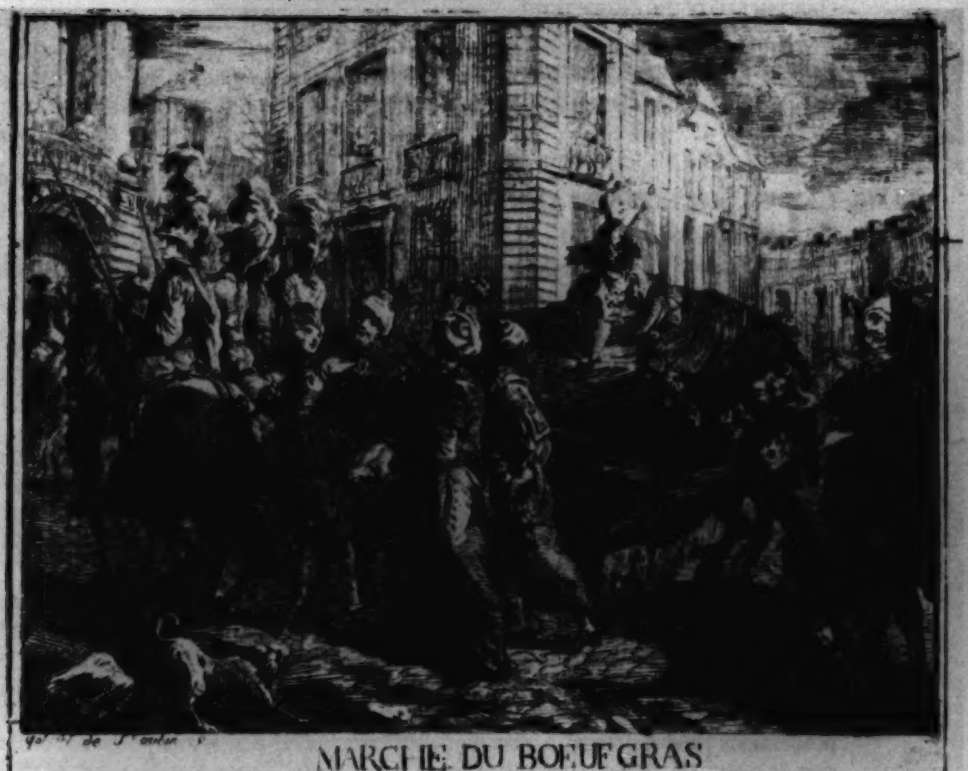
14.-15. LABAN CHERCHANT SES DIEUX

Etching, assigned to 1753
171 x 239 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *Gabriel de S^t^Aubin inv.*
lower right in second and third states: *épreuve de 10 mars 1763*
below: *LABAN CHERCHANT SES DIEUX*
Dacier 4 (11)
Three states

The painting (Dacier 3), which served as the prototype for this etching, was assigned to Academy students competing for an opening in the École Royale des Elèves Protégés in the middle of 1753. Saint-Aubin's entry was not successful, and, until a few years ago, had been lost from view. A related drawing exists in Berlin, while an oil sketch, unknown to Dacier, was recently purchased for the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The story of Jacob and Laban is told in Genesis 24-31. Jacob had long labored for Laban in exchange for the hands of Laban's two daughters, Rachel and Leah. When Jacob asked permission to return to his own people, Laban attempted to deprive him of his earnings, in revenge for which, Rachel stole her father's household gods. The etching depicts the subsequent encounter of the two men. Jacob insists on his innocence. Leah's possessions yielded nothing. Laban then confronts Rachel who is indisposed and cannot rise to greet her father, thus concealing Laban's gods. There results a vow of amity between Laban and Jacob.

1.



2.

VÜE DE LA FOIRE DE BESON.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

La France rend grace a Esculape de la guerison de M^r le Dauphin, 1682
Ce prince paroit Enuyré Sur le foyer, et Sur la prudence qui lui fait remarquer la joye du peuple qu'on apperçoit dans l'eloignement, Sur les rives le genie tutelaire du royaume chasse atropos qui abandonne son fatal ciseau
le Signe de la vierge qu'on découvre dans le zodiaque, indique le mois de cette heureuse convalescence; a côté d'esculape est un livre ouvert dans le quel on lit les nom des savants medecins qui ont veillés sur les jours du prince. et vers le bas du tableau les amours parent de fleurs les armes de l'ecuïer de la monarchie

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

14. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
First state; before inscriptions, the border line, and much crosshatching
Foul biting in man bent over at right
172 x 240/41 mm.
Printed rather uncaringly in black ink on heavy, soft laid paper; no watermark

15. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Third state; after addition of both the inscriptions and the added hatching, etc.
170 x 238 mm. (slightly trimmed)
A weak impression in warm black ink on fine, thin, laid paper; watermark: circle with figures (?)
Collection: Atherton Curtis

16. **LES QUATRES VASES**
Etching, 1754
245 x 162 mm.
Inscribed under each vase: *gabriel*
lower left, under a drypoint *remarque* of an interior scene: *Cabinet de M. de Lalive de July, introducteur des ambassadeurs. 1754*
lower right, under a drypoint *remarque* of a horse and rider: *Courses de lor powers... 1754*
Dacier 881 (12)
One State
See D.1105, *Livre de Croquis de Gabriel de Saint-Aubin*, folio 74, "La Galerie La Live de Jully," drawing in black chalk probably to be dated 1776!
Beneath the fourth vase (lower right) there appear three further drypoint sketches of unknown subjects. These closely approximate the little pencil sketches that abound in the Salon *livrets* and sales catalogues "annotated" by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. The little sketch of horses recalls the feat accomplished by Lord Powerscourt on October 29th, 1754, in breaking the Duc d'Orleans' record time by horse from Fontainebleau to Paris (one hour and fifty-three minutes). See the article by E. Le Senne.

16. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of Lessing J. Rosenwald
Only state
242 x 162 mm.
Printed in black ink on a mediocre quality, laid paper; no watermark
Collection: Irwin Laughlin

17. **LE SCÉLÉRAT DAMIENS**
Etching, 1757
168 x 135 mm.
Inscribed center right beneath the sketchy scene of Damiens in prison, garroted, before his judges: *interieur de la tour de mongomeri*
center left beneath a sketch of Damiens drawn and quartered: *idée du suplice*
lower left: *né le 5 janvier 1757* [sic!] *exécuté le 8 mars 1757*
below: *LE SCÉLÉRAT DAMIENS*
Dacier 197 (13)
One State

Robert-François Damiens was born on the 9th (not the 5th) of January, 1715 (not 1757). On the 5th of February of 1757, Damiens stabbed Louis XV as he was mounting his carriage at Versailles. Eventually imprisoned in the Tour de Montgomery, near Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, he was tried on the 26th of March. Damiens was executed on the 28th (not the 8th) by being burnt at the stake, but not before he had been publicly tortured with hot pincers, drawn, and quartered.

17. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Only state
168 x 135 mm.
Printed rather lightly in black ink on good, light laid paper; no watermark
Collection: Prince of Liechtenstein

18. LE CHARLATAN
Etching, ca. 1760
79 x 107 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *G. de Saint-Aubin f.*
below: *Ce charlatan Sur la Scène publique / Joüant les médecins, Se croit au-dessus d'eux. / Le Médecin méprise l'empyrique / Et le Sage à bon droit Se rit de tous les deux.* (These are probably the artist's own verses.)
Dacier 585 (49)
Two states

This little scene takes place on the Pont-Neuf, at the very end of the Île-de-la-Cité, in front of the statue of Henri IV.

18. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
First state; before the upward extension of the fence beneath the statue of Henri IV, and prior to the shading on the side of the carriage
80 x 107 mm. (slightly trimmed)
Printed in a warm black ink on a medium weight, laid paper; no watermark
Collection: Atherton Curtis

19.-21. SPECTACLE DES TUILERIES: LES CHAISES
Etching, 1760
93 x 193 mm.; etched on the same plate as D. 19, *le Tonneau d'arrosage:*
204 x 193 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *retouché à la pointe sèche. 1763 / gabriel de S[t] aubin f. 1760*
below: *SPECTACLE DES TUILERIES*
Dacier 539 (18)
Two states

Saint-Aubin often went to the Tuileries to sketch (see the drawing, *Le Rendez-vous des Tuileries*, number 53 of this exhibition). Several studies show the group of *Aeneas and Anchises* of this the present etching, such as D.549, 550, and page 52 of D.1071 (a marginal illustration made by Saint-Aubin in his own copy of the poet Sedaine's *Oeuvres*). Dacier 551, in pencil (66 x 48 mm.) may be a study for the etching. Among the rather elaborate (for Saint-Aubin) preparations for these etchings is the handsome chalk-and-wash drawing on folio 7 verso of the still incompletely published sketchbook belonging to the Art Institute of Chicago.

SPECTACLE DES TUILERIES: LE TONNEAU D'ARROSAGE
Etching, 1760
93 x 193 mm.; etched on the same plate as D.18, *les Chaises:*
204 x 193 mm.
Inscribed lower left: *Gabriel de S^t^ Aubin f. 1760. anée des fruits*
lower center: *novembre 1762*
Dacier 540 (19)
Two states

The scenes of D.18 and D.19 are set in the Tuileries Gardens where one still finds the same spaces and statuary. The group at the left in *les Chaises* is *Aeneas Carrying his Father, Anchises* by Lepautre; that on the right in *le Tonneau d'arrosage* is *Aria and Poetus* by Théodon and Lepautre. An anonymous note on an impression of these etchings in the Bibliothèque Nationale explains why Saint-Aubin was attracted to the subject. The Tuileries had become the gathering place for many of the more elegant of Parisian society of the day, but, aside from public benches, there were few accommodations for those who wished to sit. In 1760, several thousand chairs were brought in to rectify the situation as well as to make a profit from their rental (as is the case today). Such an increased number of strollers were attracted that it became necessary to control the dust, and this was accomplished by the hand-drawn cask which sprinkled water over the paths and promenades.

19. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of Lessing J. Rosenwald
First State before drypoint additions of 1762
92 x 192 mm., mounted down and slightly trimmed; retouched in grey ink; *"des fruits"* crossed out
Printed in black ink on laid paper
Probably from the collection of Georges Dormeuil

20. & 21. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Second states; with retouching in drypoint of 1762 and 1763 over both scenes, especially in the trees and background spaces
207 x 194 mm.
Printed in warm black ink on very regular, medium weight, laid paper; watermark: two rows of letters – Auvergne (?) +
Collections: Robert-Dumesnil, Hippolyte Destailleur; Alfred Beurdeley; Henri Thomas

22. TANCRÈDE: LA MORT DE TANCRÈDE
Etching, 1760.
Originally two images (with D.20) from one plate: 136 x 190 mm.; separate image sizes: 136 x 87 mm. each
Inscribed lower left: *gabriel de S^t^ aubin pinxit. 7 bre 1760*
lower right: *idem Sculpsit aquaforti*
below: *TANCRÈDE. acte 5^e^*
Dacier 769 (21)
Two states
D.767, watercolor over pen and chalk, is a preparatory study.

Tancrède, a play by Voltaire, was first performed in Paris on September 3, 1760. As a commemoration, Saint-Aubin etched two scenes. The one exhibited represents the action of the final scene of the fifth act.

22. Baltimore Museum of Art. Gift of the Eaton-Weld Estate
Second state
134 x 93 mm.
Printed in black ink on laid paper; no watermark

23.-24. EXPULSION DES JÉSUITES
Etching, 1761
180 x 208 mm.
Inscribed in an engraver's hand upper center: *AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM*
on left medallion: *IMPIETATIS ULTRIX JUSTITIA / COMBUSTIS LIBRIS VI[a]* die augusti. *MDCCLXI*
on right medallion: *ERRORUM FAVTORES EVITAT / PERVERSIS TANDEM DELETIS SCHOLIS. MDCCLXI*
below: *Par Arrest du 6 Août 1761, la Cour, toutes les Chambres Assemblées, a ordonné que les ouvrages de Busembaum, Escobar, Suarez, Mariana et autres seront lacérés et brulés comme séditieux, destructifs de tous principes de la Morale Chrétienne, enseignant une Doctrine meurtrière et abominable, non seulement* [sic] *contre la sûreté de la vie des Citoyens, mais même contre celle des personnes sacrées des Souverains. Par le même, il est aussi defferdu aux soidisans Jésuites de recevoir aucun Novice ni Profès, à tous Sujets du Roy de s'aggréger avec la ditte Société soi-disante de Jésus sous quelque prétexte que ce soit; et est enjoint à tous Pères et Mères de retirer leurs Enfans des collèges de la Société et de concourir a l'exécution du présent Arrest, comme de bons et fidèles sujets du Roy, zelez pour sa conservation.*
Dacier 176 (23)
Two states

Three preparatory drawings, unknown to either Dacier or the Goncourts, exist (see this catalogue, numbers 42A & B).

Dacier suggests that the initials *P.C.* (in the frame to right of line ending *"Mariana et"*) might designate the engraver (Lecoeur?) who finished this work for Saint-Aubin.

On August 6, 1761, the French Parliament issued a decree virtually outlawing the Jesuits from France, labeling their dogmas as "abominable and murderous," ordering many of their books burned, and closing their schools. In the left medallion the books are being burned while an official reads a decree. At the right, two Jesuit students flee their "college." In what might be mock sympathy, the artist has placed a shocked or weeping Jesuit at the right of each scene, while below, the fox without his tail suggests the demise and disgrace of a crafty one (see the Aesopian fable, *The Fox Without a Tail*, taken up by La Fontaine in his own *Fables*, Book V, number 5). As Rossiter suggests, Saint-Aubin quite assuredly identified with the regime in these things (having portrayed Damiens), and his inclusion of the scales, hand, and sword of justice in the *Expulsion* hardly seem tinged with any kind of satiric content.

23. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Katherine Eliot Bullard Fund
First state, retouched with wash
180 x 202 mm.
Printed in black ink on medium-thin, laid paper; watermark: fragment of a cross in a circle (?)
Collection: de Goncourt

24. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Second state; with addition of inscriptions, much vertical hatching throughout the image, and a strengthened border
180 x 205 mm. (slightly trimmed)
Printed in black ink on a rather coarse, medium weight, laid paper; no watermark
Collections: Jean-Louis Soulavie; Atherton Curtis

25. **LE BAL D'AUTEUIL**
Etching, 1761
140 x 88 mm.
Inscribed upper left: *2*
lower right: *auteuil. g.d.S. 1761*
lower left: *gabriel de S^t aubin f.*
Dacier 921 (25)

Two states; Dacier failed to note that the delicate landscape behind the carriage appears only in the second state.

Intended as a frontispiece (folio 2) for S^r de La Cuisse, *Répertoire des bals, ou Théorie-pratique des contredanses*, Paris, Mlle. Castagnery, 1762, for which Gabriel etched two demonstrative illustrations consisting of small figures and accompanying diagrams, catalogued by Dacier under numbers 922 (26) and 923 (27). Dacier describes a black chalk drawing of the same title (D.590) which is not preparatory for this etching.

In the spring and summer Paris hosted "country" balls at several of the city's portals—this one at Porte d'Auteuil, to the south. The dances included various entertainments—concerts, illuminations, fireworks—anything to attract the young and chic.

25. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Stephen Bullard Memorial Fund
Undescribed state, between Dacier's first and second: before the "2" removed but after "fecit" had been added
138 x 83 mm.
Printed in black ink on coarse, laid paper; no watermark
Inscribed on verso: Villeneuve G M^o d'Est... St. Jacques N^o 9, 1809

26. **L'INCENDIE DE LA FOIRE DE SAINT-GERMAIN: RUINES DE LA FOIRE, VUE PRISE DU CÔTÉ DU GRAND CAFÉ D'ALEXANDRE**
Etching, 1762
One of six scenes on one plate 277 x 395 mm.; this scene 128 x 122 mm.
Inscribed on the facade: *presbitère ou communauté de S. Sulpice*
lower left: G... D. S...
below: *débris de la foire du coste du grand café d'Alexandre*
Dacier 513 (33)

Only state

The fair or market of Saint-Germain was a vast complex of covered stalls that stretched from Saint-Germain des Près to Saint Sulpice. At three o'clock on the morning of March 17, 1762, the entire area was laid bare by an uncontrollable fire. Saint-Aubin was on the scene and apparently, if one follows his inscription on the lower left scene, made sketches that very dawn, transferred them to a copperplate, etched and proofed his work by the 18th at the very latest. The haste may have been to no avail, however, for only one image was bitten deeply enough to provide a strong image, and that in a re-etching of October, seven months later, (D.512-32).

26. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Katherine Eliot Bullard Fund
Only state
137 x 128 mm. (sheet)
Printed in black ink on light, laid paper; watermark: row of letters

27.-28. ALLÉGORIE SUR L'ERECTION DE LA STATUE DE LOUIS XV A PARIS

Etching, 1763
299 x 241 mm.
Inscribed lower right: *gabriel de S^t Aubin f.*
lower left: 1763; lower left at bottom of inscription space: *imprimé sur papier de la chine*
On the left pedestal: . . . *le génie tutellaire applaudit a la paix universelle* [?]; *il est précédé par la reconnaissance qui présente les coeur de tout les citoyens, la bonté, la clémence, la Sagesse et la piété du Roi sont représentées dans les superbes tapisseries qui doivent décorer ce Spectacle brillant*
On the right pedestal: *la magnificence de la ville accompagnée de l'architecture et de la Sculpture marchant sur les riches tapis ordone les aprêts d'une feste. plusieurs groupes de génies enlèvent les masts qui ont servi à ellever la statue et le voile qui la couvroit. l'auteur de ce tableau astreint à une grandeur donnée supose les objets rassemblées par enchantement. G. de S.*
Dacier 75 (36)
Two states

D.566-571, five drawings and an engraving by P.C. Levesque of Place Louis XV, are recorded by Dacier; none, however, is a direct study for the present etching.

On June 20, 1763, Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV was formally inaugurated in what is now the Place de la Concord. The pedestal was ornamented with Pigalle's personifications of Strength, Prudence, Justice, and Love of Peace. On each side of Louis XV are the so-called Horses of Marly, Mercury and Fame by Coysevox, moved to Paris in 1718 (Saint-Aubin had already sketched them in 1759, see D.1105, p.9), which still mark one of the entrances to the Tuileries. In Gabriel's etching, the unveiling of Louis XV is accomplished by an airborne corps of spirits, while two groups of allegorical figures present the statue to the viewer. At the left are the genii of Protection, Peace (?), and Gratitude; at the right stand figures of Architecture, Sculpture, and The City of Paris. It seems that the artist further intended that the draperies being removed should portray Louis' benevolence, clemency, wisdom, and piety. As if this were not sufficient, Saint-Aubin made certain that the citizens of Paris and the actualities of the day were manifest, notably in the bower with wine casks and the dancing citizens.

16.

17.

18.

19.

THEATRE DES TUILERIES

22.

23.

Par Arrest du 6. Août 1761. la Cour, toutes les Chambres Assemblées, a ordonné que les ouvrages de Busembaum, Escobar, Sanchez, Hereau et autres seront lacérés et brulés comme exhalant, destructifs de tous principes de la Morale Chrétienne, enseignant une Doctrine meurtrière et abominable, non-seulement contre la sureté de la vie des Citoyens, mais même contre celle des personnes sacrées des Souverains. Par le même il est aussi défendu aux soi-disans Novices ou Profès, à tous Sujets du Roy de s'engager avec la dite Société soi-disante de Jesus sous quelque prétexte que ce soit; et est enjoint à tous Peres et Recteurs de retirer leurs Enfans des Colléges de la Société et de concourir à l'exécution du présent Arrest, comme de bons et fideles Sujets du Roy, zélés pour sa conservation.

24.

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

30.

31.

ALLEGORIE SUR LE MARIAGE DE MONSEIGNEUR LE COMTE DE PROVENCE
Dédié à S. Monseigneur le Comte de Provence
et à Madame la Comtesse de Provence,
présenté au ROI et à la Famille Royale.

32.

27. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
First state; with inscriptions at lower left: . . . *gravé par gabriel de S^t^ aubin 1763,* and . . . *imprimé sur papier de la chine;* in cartouche at base of statue of Louis XV: *A Louis le bien aimé*
319 x 237 mm.; mounted down on window sheet
Printed in warm black ink on good quality, medium weight, laid paper; watermark: two rows of letters – AUVERGNE (?) below
Collections: Hippolyte Destailleur; Alfred Beurdeley; Henri Thomas

28. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Trial proof of the second state; the plate vastly reworked to strengthen weak biting of first state; the inscription on the statue has become less visible
316 x 240 mm.; mounted on window sheet
Printed in brown-black ink on fine, laid paper, identical to that used for *Laban* (cat. no. 15); watermark: circle with two animals flanking a figure
Collections: Robert-Dumesnil (?); Hippolyte Destailleur; Alfred Beurdeley; Henri Thomas

29.-30. LA COLÈRE DE NEPTUNE

Etching, 1767
107 x 80 mm.
Inscribed upper center . . . *gabriel de S^t^* . . . on the socle: . . . *bronze* . . . *cheval (?)* . . . *M. de Jullienne*
dated lower left: *1757* and lower right: *1767*
lower center: *LA COLERE DE NEPTUNE G.D.S.A.*
below: *gabriel de S^t^ aubin invenit et fecit, N° 1314 du catalogue de M^r^ de Jullienne*
along right edge: *toute la fontaine est gravee par M^r^ Canut et se trouve chez M. Chereau, rue S^t^ Jaque, aux deux pilliers d'or.*
Dacier 813 (39)
Two states known to Dacier

Saint-Aubin's inscription refers to the catalogue of the Jullienne sale (Paris, 1767). The model for the etching is there identified as a terra-cotta study for a fountain by Jacques-François Blondel, architect, theoretician, and educator. Blondel was head of a small *académie* at which Gabriel taught, at least as early as 1747. We believe that the 1757 date refers to the inception of the fountain project. Dacier reports that a note in the dealer Mariette's hand, reveals that Blondel and Saint-Aubin designed the fountain jointly, although this may be mitigated by the "M^r^ Canut" referred to in the other of Saint-Aubin's inscriptions. This is, in reality, the engraver Le Canu. His engraving of the entire ensemble makes no mention of Gabriel.

29. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939
Undescribed state, prior to Dacier's first; before all indications of an architectural setting; inscribed at lower left (disappears in subsequent states): *G. de S^t^ aubin inv.*
100 x 77 mm. (image – the platemark is not visible)
Printed lightly in brown ink on a good, but slightly coarse, laid paper; no watermark

30. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
Dacier's second state
107 x 80 mm.
Printed in black ink on medium weight, moderately good, laid paper; no watermark

31.-32. **ALLÉGORIE SUR LE MARIAGE DU COMTE DE PROVENCE**
Etching, 1771
327 x 221 mm.
Inscribed (third state) above: *PROJECT D'ALLÉGORIE SUR LE MARIAGE DE MONSEIGNEUR LE COMTE DE PROVENCE / Le Génie de la Provence et celui de la Savoye réunissent leurs armes dans le Temple de l'Hymen décoré des médaillons de Henri IV et de ceux des Rois ses successeurs / dont les descendants se perdent dans le sein de l'Eternité. l'Amour échange son flambeau contre celui de son frère. Minerve donne au Roi le miroir de la prudence.*
beneath the anchor below: *épreuve dans le goût d'un dessin à la plume. 1771*
on the broadside lying on the ground, in an engraver's hand: *Aline Reine de Golconde Opéra. Les projets de l'amour. Caliste et Mirsille Opéra*
lower left, beneath image: *Gabriel de S^t Aubin del. et sculp.*
lower right, beneath image: *Eau forte. May 1771*
lower center in engraver's hand: *Quis, Ludovice, tuos poterit numerare nepotes? / Louis le bien-aimé, ta sage prévoyance / Affermit à jamais le Trône de la France / Dédiée à Monseigneur le Comte de Provence / et à Madame La Comtesse de Provence, / et présentée au ROY et à la Famille Royale, / Par Bezassier, Chanoine régulier de l'Abbaye de S^t Loup de Troyes.*
lower left in Saint-Aubin's hand: *Le Livre de l'Histoire est porté par l'éléphant simbole de / La force et la Roue du Destin est enchainée / au Terme, la guirlande qui réunit les deux / Génies et enchaîne l'Amour / au joug de l'Hymen se termine à l'encre de l'Espérence*
lower right in Saint-Aubin's hand: *Sur le lit Nuptial orné du chifre des Augustes / Epoux se caressent deux Tourterelles, symboles / de la fidélité conjugale; le Lion, l'Agneau et / le Lapin groupés ensemble désignent / le Règne de la Paix et le / retour de l'Age d'or.*
at the very bottom left: *épreuve en mai 1773*
Dacier 82 (46)
Three states

On the 14th of May 1771, the Comte de Provence (the future Louis XVIII) married Louise-Marie-Joséphine de Savoie. For this occasion, Saint-Aubin composed his most complicated allegory, and even provided his own commercial in the *Avant-Coureur*. We translate Dacier's transcription of it:

> An allegorical print dedicated to M^gr le comte de Provence and to Madame la comtesse de Provence, and presented to the King and the Royal Family, composed, etched, and worked in drypoint by M. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, painter of history. Paris, at the artist's home, rue de Beauvais, place du Louvre, the carpenter's house, third floor.

This print measures approximately nine inches in height and seven in width. To be noted in the upper reaches are two hearts, pierced by the same arrow, which are placed between two genii who hold the arms of France and Savoy. Below, Wisdom in the guise of Minerva, shows the King of France, wearing his royal mantle, the book of destiny. This volume is supported by the tusks of an elephant, regarded by the ancients as a symbol of a long life. On the same level, Amour exchanges torches with Hymen, at whose feet he has discarded his wings and quiver. The yoke of marriage is seen between the two divinities. Amour is winding it with a garland of flowers which is already entwined about the anchor of hope. In the background is the conjugal bed surmounted by columns atop of which range a series of medallions of French Kings since Henri IV. The series loses itself in a figure, seated amid a circle of stars and holding a globe in each hand, who signifies eternity. Further on, one spies the god Terminus who has chained the wheel of destiny. The golden age is symbolized in this allegorical composition by a lion who reposes at peace with a lamb and a rabbit.

Those to whom the language of symbols is familiar, will discover still other thoughts in this etching, which, while only a simple sketch, might also be regarded as proof of the artist's own enthusiasm.

31. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection
First state; with inscriptions as follows:
beneath the lion: *Gabriel de S^t Aubin*
on the stock of the anchor (in reverse): *composé et gravé à l'eau-forte*
on the shank of the anchor: *Gabriel de S^t Aubin fecit*
beneath the anchor: *G. d. S. A. f*
below left: *Composé et gravé à l'eau-forte par Gabriel de S^t Aubin*
below right: *en Mai 1771*
263 x 212 mm. (sheet)
Retouched in pen and pencil
Printed in black ink on medium weight, rather coarse, laid paper; no watermark
Collections: Robert-Dumesnil; Atherton Curtis

32. Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University
Third State; reworked overall; with the lengthy inscriptions as recorded above
300 x 198 mm. (trimmed within platemark at sides and bottom)
Printed a bit unevenly in black ink on medium weight, rather coarse, laid paper; no watermark
Collection: Jean-Louis Soulavie

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33. DESIGN FOR A FIREWORKS DISPLAY GIVEN BY THE CITY OF PARIS IN CELEBRATION OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE DAUPHIN IN 1747

Pen and black ink, black and gray washes over black chalk; a few passages in pen and brown ink; three sketches of ornament and a dolphin in black chalk; squared for enlargement in black chalk; 1747
416 x 599 mm.
Inscribed lower left in pen and brown ink: *Feu du Mariage du Dauphin tiré le 12 Fevier 1747 / L'artifice tirer par les deux artifiers Italien, et francais / La Feste des chars le 9. jour du mariage.* In the lower center is an indication of the scale in *pieds* and *toises.* Inscribed in black chalk at left center *obscure,* and right center *clair*
References: Stampfle 1964

On February 13, 1747 Louis of France, Dauphin, was married to Marie-Josèphe of Saxony. Louis XV ordered a lavish public celebration in honor of the event in which cavalry and five floats made their way through Paris dispensing refreshments to the populace. That night a fireworks display before the Hôtel de Ville was the climax to the day long celebration. A commemorative folio of engravings preserves a visual record of the events; a copy of the volume is also in the Morgan Library. Felice Stampfle has studied in detail the relationship between the drawing and final double plate of the folio, illustrating the fireworks. Althought the two do not coincide, they share a basic iconograph and a general similarity of layout.

The title page of the 1747 folio credits "François Blondel, Architecte du Roy" with the designs for the engraved plates. At this time we know that Gabriel was a teacher in Blondel's École des Arts, since the latter's brochure of that year lists him as able to give instruction in anatomy as well as *"les parties de l'Histoire nécessaire pour parvenir à placer avec choix les attributs, les allégories convenables au palais des rois, aux édifices sacrés, aux maisons de plaisance, bâtimens publics, fêtes, etc. . . . ."* (Dacier 1929, p. 27).

Stylistically the attribution of the design to the twenty-three year old draughtsman is tenable, even though it was not included among the plates Blondel engraved, nor are the inscriptions in Gabriel's hand. However, the trembling, nervous quality of line and the use of dots to represent faces as well as textures are characteristic of Saint-Aubin's *Allegory on the Birth of the Duc de Bourgogne,* 1751, also now in the Morgan Library. The figure types are also similar: bodies with long torsos, tapering limbs and heads a bit too small in relation to the height of the figure. Rarely did Saint-Aubin apply washes with such breadth as in the foreground of this drawing, although Gabriel's preparatory wash study for his 1752 ceiling design *The Triumph of Love* (ex coll. Marquis de Biron, sold Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, June 9-11, 1914, no. 57 reprod.) does demonstrate a similar handling of the medium. Recently another design for a triumphal arch attributed to Gabriel was exhibited (see Amsterdam 1974, no. 111).

The Pierpont Morgan Library, Purchased as the Gift of Anne and Carl Stern.

34. ALLEGORY ON THE BIRTH OF THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE

Pen and brown ink, brush with brown and sanguine wash, over black chalk; ca. 1751
135 x 172 mm.
Collections: Camille Groult, Paris; John S. Newberry
Reference: Cailleux 1960, pp. IV-V

To celebrate the birth of the Duc de Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XV, the monarch decided to defray the expenses of marrying six hundred poor but worthy couples in the city of Paris, rather than spend the sum on a costly festival, as had been proposed. The marriages were performed on November 9, 1751, followed by a supper in honor of the couples. Gabriel etched an allegory to commemorate the event (catalogue 4). There are small, but telling details which connect the Morgan Library's drawing with the civic marriages allegorized in Saint-Aubin's print. In the lower right corner of each work the artist has sketched the twin towers of Notre-Dame as seen from behind the arches of the Pont Neuf. With that as a clue, Jean Cailleux has convincingly argued that the allegory alluded to in the drawing must be the same event. There are other reasons to associate the drawing with the Duc de Bourgogne's birth. In the drawing, the goddess paying hommage to the young prince wears a crown with pinnacles, a reference to the City of Paris (not to royalty); behind the goddess in both works is a shield with the Arms of Paris. Holding the prince in the drawing is a figure representing Hymen, symbolized by a flaming torch. In the etching Hymen receives the coins distributed by the City of Paris. Both etching and drawing contain a rainbow, symbol of alliance. Print and drawing differ in most other respects. Perhaps Saint-Aubin intended the drawing to be a first thought for a painting, since he surrounded the composition by a frame. Equally well, the design could appropriately have adorned the lid of a small box or similar object.

The Pierpont Morgan Library, Purchased as the Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Salomon

35. MOMUS

Red and black chalks, with white chalk, on light tan paper; 1752
353 x 242 mm.
Inscribed on scroll, in black chalk: *Recue (il) / de / Déguisem (ents) / du Bal de / Saint Cloud / 1752 / D^{s} G^{l} de Saint-Aubin*
Collections: Gilbert Levy; David-Weill (not in Henriot); Mrs. D. Peck

On the stage Momus is traditionally a buffoon or figure of ridicule. Here he holds in his left hand a rattle topped with a grotesque head wearing a fool's cap. In Momus's right hand is a scroll advertising a collection of costume designs, whether for the stage or for a private entertainment is unknown. Saint-Aubin probably intended his figure to ornament the title page to a collection of engravings.

The Pierpont Morgan Library, Purchased as the Gift of the Fellows

36. NOBLEMAN BEING SHOWN A MAP OR PLAN

Black chalk with pen and brown ink; 1750-1760
123 x 168 mm.
Inscribed in black chalk, lower right: *G d S* (not by Saint-Aubin)

The important gentleman examining a map or plan has been identified, without any basis in fact, as the Marquis de Marigny. Very probably the scene was inspired by one of the building projects of Louis XV's reign. The figure's delicately tapered limbs, together with the schematic modeling, point to an early date for the drawing.

H. Shickman Gallery, New York

37. STUDY FOR *CONVERSATION GALANTE*

Black and sanguine chalks, heightened with white chalk, and pen and brown ink; 1757
129 x 199 mm.
Inscribed in black chalk, upper left: *12 août 1757 Sedaine 27*
Collections: Baron Roger Portalis, stamp lower left (not in Lugt) and lower right (Lugt 2232); purchased by the present owner in London, 1946
References: Dacier 142

The young man half-stretched out on the ground, with his hands clasped imploringly against his chest, is a preliminary study for Saint-Aubin's etching, *la Conversation galante* (Dacier 141-16), known only in a unique proof. Fortunately the date on the drawing serves also as an approximate indication of when the etching was created.

Saint-Aubin's drawing owes much to Boucher's elegantly dressed pastoral figures. The young man's costume and pose depend on the example of Gabriel's former teacher, as does the subject itself. Rarely is Saint-Aubin so adept at rendering luxuriant, shimmering fabrics as in this drawing. The reference to the popular playwright, Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797), remains enigmatic. At this time Gabriel etched a frontispiece which was later used in volume I of *Recueil de Poésies de M. Sedaine*..., Paris, 1760 (Dacier 1914, pp. 66-68). In that volume is a poem addressed to Saint-Aubin counseling him to abandon subjects based on mythology and history in favor of "Quelque sujet tendre et galante / un rien, une esquise légère...."

Baltimore Collector

38. MONUMENTS; AN ANCIENT SACRIFICE

Pen and brown ink; late 1750s
236 x 255 mm.
Collections: Dr. Maurice de Fleury; Richard Owen
References: Dacier 1095; Mongan-Sachs 1946, no. 636, fig. 319

The subject of the ancient sacrifice remains impossible to identify more precisely. Perhaps it is a dramatic presentation since the elaborate classical architecture suggests a stage setting in the style of Servandoni. At the upper left is an elaboration, probably fanciful, of the sculptural group at the right of the lower drawing. Stylistically the sacrificial scene is an anomaly in Saint-Aubin's draughtsmanship. The crowds of figures are drawn with minimal attention to gesture and none to individual expression. However, the short parallel lines used to model individual figures is a device the artist used in another sheet dated 1759 (repro. Dacier 1931, pl. XIX), which roughly indicates the position of the Fogg's drawing within the artist's chronology.

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. Gift of Richard Owen

39. STUDY OF A MALE NUDE; Verso: SKETCHES AFTER PAINTINGS

Black chalk (recto and verso); 1750-1760
335 x 220 mm.
Collections: Baron Roger Portalis, stamp lower right of recto (Lugt 2232); David Daniels
References: Minneapolis 1968, no. 25

Figures drawn from models posed in the studio are rarely encountered in Saint-Aubin's work. Apparently Dacier did not know this drawing since he lists only one *académie* of a male figure, an upright composition (Dacier 131). Were it not for the sketches after other works of art on the reverse, the attribution of the figure study would be difficult to sustain. Yet we should expect to find such *académies* in Saint-Aubin's work, since from 1747 to at least 1757 Gabriel taught at the École des Arts, established by the architect Jacques-François Blondel, where the artist is mentioned as giving instruction in the principles and proportions of the human figure. Certainly figure studies like this would have been a standard part of his program.

H. Shickman Gallery, New York

40. FÊTES VÉNITIENNES

Watercolor and gouache with pen and brown ink; ca. 1759
203 x 150 mm.
Inscribed in pen and brown ink, lower left: *De S^t^ Aubin inv.*
Collections: Destailleur; A. Focqué; Mme. Paul Tuffier
References: Dacier 749, reprod. pl. XXVIII

Dacier has identified this theatrical scene with one of the most celebrated ballets of the eighteenth century, *Les Fêtes Vénitiennes*, which Saint-Aubin could have seen performed at the Paris Opera in 1750 or 1759. The prologue to the ballet was set in Venice, and we recognize on stage the Piazzetta. Between the two columns at the end of the Piazzetta is an elevated stage-within-a-stage referred to in a contemporary description of the ballet. Saint-Aubin has shown the entry of "L'Amour Saltimbanque," identified by his costume and the bow he carries, as he advances towards the couple in the center. From what we know of Saint-Aubin's development, such a watercolor would have been beyond his capabilities in 1750; thus we follow Dacier's suggestion that the work was inspired by the later revival.

The Robert Lehman Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

41. FÊTE IN A PARK WITH COSTUMED DANCERS

Pen and brown ink, brush with brown wash and watercolor, over a graphite sketch; ca. 1760
198 x 313 mm.
Inscribed in graphite, lower left: *G. de S^t^ Aubin*
Collection: John S. Thatcher
References: Parker 1938; Richards 1967; Toronto 1972-73, no. 130

The various outdoor fairs which were held near Paris drew Gabriel like a magnet to the villages of Auteuil, Saint-Cloud, Sceaux and many others. Cleveland's drawing surely is based on one of these popular diversions. In the center a couple dance before a group of spectators. The man wears a harlequin costume, while his elegantly dressed partner

carries a little mouse on her headdress. Louise Richards has discovered that in the 18th century the mouse would have been recognized as a symbol of domestic havoc. Thus the scene may represent more than an innocent pastime, and contain on another level an allusion to the transitory nature of our pleasures.

There is no evidence to situate the event in a precise location. In a general way the trees wrapped with garlands and strung with lanterns recall Gabriel's etching *le Bal d'Auteuil, 1761* (catalogue 25), but one can also find similar decorations in a 1760 engraving after Lavallée–Poussin's *Bal de Saint-Cloud* (see Georges Wildenstein, "La Fête de Saint-Cloud et Fragonard," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LV, 1960, repro. p. 45). The figure of the dancing girl occurs again in an engraving by Basan after a lost Saint-Aubin painting (repro. Richards 1967, p. 217). An inscription identifies the scene as *La Guinguette*, a ballet-pantomime often staged at the Théâtre Italien (see Michel 1945). However, one must question the value of the engraving as a document for the theatrical performance since Gabriel has lifted his figure from an informal rustic ambience and transposed her onto the Parisian stage with barely a change of costume. Although Cleveland's drawing is not dated, the various relationships cited above all tend to situate it in the early 1760s.

Cleveland Museum of Art. Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund

42. THREE PREPARATORY DRAWINGS FOR *THE EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS*, 1761

A. Recto: pen and black ink, brush and gray wash over black chalk
Verso: pen and black ink over black chalk
126 x 227 mm.
Inscribed on recto in black chalk, on left medallion: *combustis libris / anno 1761;* inscribed on right medallion, over fireplace: *Ludovici Magni / Collegium*
References: Rossiter 1962; Toronto 1972-73, no. 129

B. Pen and black ink, brush and gray wash, over black chalk
127 x 177 mm.
Inscribed in pen and ink, left medallion: *La doctrine des jes. brullée / 1761 / arret du 1e août 1761.*
right medallion: *La Ferulle des jes brullée / 1761.*
References: Rossiter 1962

On August 6, 1761, the French Parliament issued a decree against the Jesuits, condemning their teachings, and ordering their colleges closed and their books burnt. A year later a second indictment ordered them out of France. Four years earlier Louis XV had been attacked by Robert-François Damiens, a plot which rumor attached to the Jesuit's instigation. Saint-Aubin etched Damien's portrait at that time (Dacier 13).

In the first of two preparatory drawings for Gabriel's etching inspired by the 1761 decree (see catalogue 23), we see in the left medallion a man tearing pages from Jesuitical books and burning them in front of a staircase. The medallion opposite shows a student fleeing the college gate while a Jesuit stands at one side with bowed head. The upright of a scale divides the composition, with the scale pans filling the upper right and left corners. At the bottom a fox stands between the two medallions, above a space reserved for an inscription. Compared to the drawing on the verso which is a detailed preparation for the etching, the recto preserves an earlier study. There the architecture of the right medallion is more elaborate—and more confused—than in the final

work, while the setting of the left medallion does not yet have the spatial depth Saint-Aubin gave it in his drawing and in the etching.

The second sheet refines the medallion designs sketched on the recto of the working drawing for the print, but varies the surrounding attributes. A scale now holds the medallions in balance, while a garland is swagged across the top of the composition. Perhaps Saint-Aubin found this alternative too elegant and formal, since the third drawing reverts to his original plan.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Edwin E. Jack Fund

43. SCENE DURING THE OPERA *ARMIDE*

Pen and brown ink, brush with watercolor and gouache, over a graphite sketch; 1761
310 x 500 mm.
Collections: The Hermitage, Leningrad; Robert Treat Paine II, Boston
References: Dacier 745, reprod. pl. XXVII

Dacier has convincingly shown that the performance of Lully's *Armide* which was drawn by Saint-Aubin must be the revival staged in 1761 since the auditorium of the Palais Royal shown here was destroyed by fire in 1763. Revivals were also performed in 1764 and 1777, but the 1761 production was notable for the magnificence of its costumes and decor. Saint-Aubin's copy of Sedaine's *Poésies* mentions seeing *Armide* at the Opera in September 1761 (Dacier, p. 207), and further notes that Boucher and his son François *fils* were responsible for the settings.

The Boston watercolor is one of Saint-Aubin's most ambitious and successful works in that medium. On the stage Rinaldo and Armide stand out by virtue of their elegant gesticulations. The elaborate details of costumes and backdrops are kept under control through a sensitive manipulation of light which emphasizes the main characters and gives a sense of depth to the stage perspective. Although the audience is alive with witty observation, nothing detracts from the action on stage. Rarely has Saint-Aubin so rigorously organized a large space, every inch of which is filled with incident, into such a cohesive whole. The spacial illusion of Boucher's set is echoed by the actual space of the auditorium, a subtle observation requiring a command of perspective which Gabriel rarely otherwise exhibits.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Elizabeth Paine Card in memory of her father, Robert Treat Paine II.

44. DESIGN FOR A FRONTISPIECE TO SEDAINE'S *LE JARDINIER ET SON SEIGNEUR*

Pen and black ink, brush and gray wash over graphite, heightened with white; 1761
125 x 80 mm.
Collections: Comte de La Beraudière; G. Mühlbacher; Sigismond Bardac; Marius Paulme, stamp lower left (Lugt 1910); Albert Meyer; Richard Penard y Fernandez
References: Dacier 899

The drawing was engraved by Augustin de Saint-Aubin and used as the frontispiece to Sedaine's comic-opera *Le Jardinier et Son Seigneur* (Paris, 1761; see Dacier 1914,

pp. 147-148). Scene XVIII of the play provided the subject for the drawing, showing a vain and pretentious farmer in a peruke bowing to a nobleman who he would like to marry his daughter. Sedaine's moral about the folly of such pretentions had enormous success at the time (see Günther 1908, pp. 44-45).

Rosenberg and Stiebel, Inc., New York

45. FOUR STUDIES OF A YOUNG GIRL

Graphite and black chalk; 1762-1764
167 x 220 mm.
Inscribed on recto: *Envoi à M. Vallayer orphèvre de Gobelins — Gabriel de Saint Aubin;*
on verso, in pen and ink: *Monsieur Vallayer orphèvre / du Roy aux Gobelins.*
Collections: Hippolyte Destailleur; Baron Pichon; David-Weill
References: Dacier 389; de Goncourt 1873, I, p. 436; Henriot, III, p. 447, reprod.; Boucher and Jaccottet, pl. 72; New York 1959, no. 78

The profile of the young lady at the left of the sheet represents the earliest known portrait of the artist Anne Vallayer-Coster, the daughter of the goldsmith Joseph Vallayer. Originally the drawing was folded twice in the form of a letter, and addressed to Vallayer at the Gobelins. However, the goldsmith had not worked there since 1754, at which time his daughter was ten years old. Although the address remains puzzling, the identification of the subject is acceptable (see Marianne Roland Michel, *Anne Vallayer-Coster 1744-1818*, Paris, 1970, pp. 15-16, reprod.).

The Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of David Adler

46. IRRUPTION DE CHANTEURS COSTUMÉS

Pen and brown ink, brush with watercolor and gouache; 1765-1775
203 x 260 mm.
Inscribed in pen, on scroll: *G dS*
Collections: A. Perignon; Hippolyte Destailleur; Lion
References: Dacier 659, repro. pl. XXIV; Shoolman and Slatkin, p. 74, repro. pl. 50; New York 1959, no. 81

Dacier proposed that the subject of this watercolor is a scene from a private entertainment being given in the presence of royalty, specifically Louis XV. Among the ranks of spectators there are only two clearly identifiable men, one seated in the center of the front row and, wearing dark robes, an abbot standing behind a chair. Court etiquette determined that only the King had the right to occupy an armchair, as we see here, unless he specifically made an exception. Other members of the court sat on chairs or stools of varying degrees of comfort, strictly determined according to rank. Whether Louis XV is represented here remains unproven, although the seated gentleman is certainly of royal birth.

The watercolor is one of Saint-Aubin's most scintillating essays in that medium, and consequently is difficult to date. Gabriel's central interest here is the brilliant optical effect obtained by applying watercolor and gouache broadly to create a sparkling impression of the lavish assembly. The play of light from the chandeliers over the rich materials and furnishings of the scene so occupied the artist that the reportorial details in which Saint-Aubin usually delighted are reduced to a minimum. A comparison with his

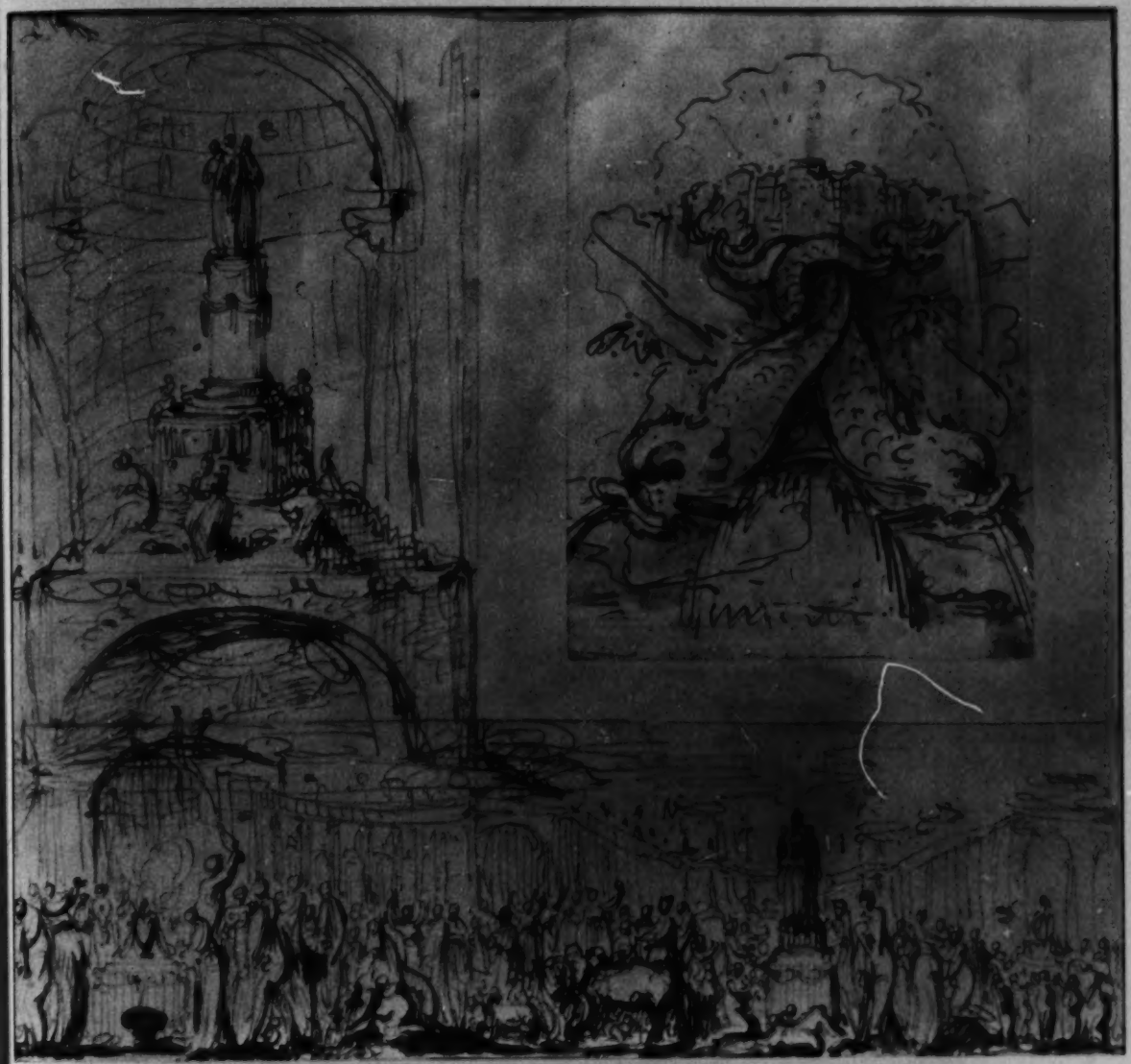
33.

34.

35.

36.

37.



38.

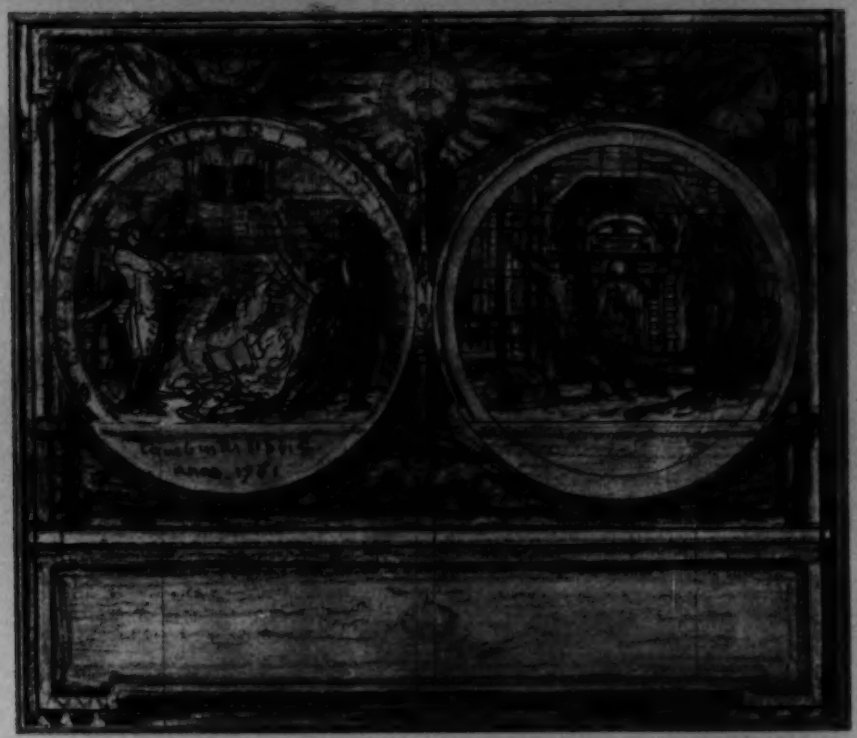
39. *(verso)*

39. (recto)

40.

41.

41. (detail)



42A. (verso)

42A. (recto)

42B.

43.

44.

45.

46.

47.

1761 *Armide*, exhibited here (cat. no. 43), illustrates how determinedly the artist has avoided particulars in his attempt to render the optical interaction of color and light. This interest would suggest a rather late period in Saint-Aubin's chronology. However, by comparison with the drawings from the mid- to late-1770s in this exhibition, the watercolor does not evidence the interest in vast spaces or the dramatic use of chiaroscuro to render perspective (the diagonal of a beam of light, for example) which is such a striking development in his later work. By virtue of its breadth and assurance, the Straus watercolor is an apogee in the artist's use of the medium.

Lent by Mrs. Herbert N. Straus, New York, in memory of Dr. Heinrich Schwarz

47. ALLEGORY OF VANITY

Pen and brown ink, brush with brown wash and watercolor over black chalk and sanguine; 1767
190 x 129 mm.
Inscribed in pen and brown ink, lower right: *G d SA 1767;* inscribed in black chalk, to right of figure: *La femme resist / difficilment / à la tentation;* inscribed in pen and ink, on casket: *trésor.*
Collection: Marius Paulme, stamp lower left (Lugt 1910)

Saint-Aubin's inscription is, for him, an unusual piece of moralizing about the nature of women. His figure stands with bent head, one finger touching her chin. In her left hand she holds a small object, perhaps an apple in reference to the fall of man. The serpent at the lower right would be appropriate in this context. Gabriel must have had the Chicago drawing at hand when in 1779 he repeated the figure in a study of the Three Graces, folio 113 of his sketchbook preserved in Stockholm (see Dacier 1955, pl. xxv).

The Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of Tiffany and Margaret Blake

48. REVELLERS AT A TABLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Pen and brown wash over black chalk; late 1760s
256 x 195 mm. (sheet); 245 x 190 mm. (border)
Inscribed in pen and brown ink: *Trianon/Marly;* inscribed in pen and brown ink, lower right margin: *G. S[t] Aubin del* (not by Gabriel)

Seated around a table set out-of-doors in the country, a party is seen drinking an excessive amount of wine. Behind them is a trellis with two placards inscribed with the names of two of Louis XV's country estates, the Trianon and Marly, to which his court often went as an escape from the formal etiquette of Versailles. Saint-Aubin's drawing undoubtedly refers to a piece of then-popular scandal since there could be no reason otherwise to attach these references to a simple bucolic scene.

The Robert Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

49. HOMMAGE TO MARIE ANTOINETTE

Pen and brown ink, brush and gray wash over black chalk; border washed with green watercolor to simulate a mat; 1770
222 x 175 mm.
Inscribed in black chalk, lower right: *G. de S[t] Aubin 1770*
Collections: Marcel Thévenin; Marquis de Biron
References: Dacier 84; Williams 1939

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On May 16, 1770, Marie Antoinette was married at Versailles to the Dauphin. His armorial shield is held by two putti at the base of an altar where a kneeling figure in an ermine trimmed robe pays hommage to a portrait of the Dauphine held by two Graces. The drawing is a typical example of the allegories Saint-Aubin often devised to commemorate civic or national events.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Rogers Fund, 1937

50. TWO STUDIES FOR A FRONTISPIECE TO EDWARD YOUNG'S *OEUVRES DIVERSES* (Paris, 1770)

A. Pen and brown ink over sanguine and black chalks, touched with white chalk
138 x 83 mm.
Inscribed in pen and ink, lower left margin: *G d SA*

B. Black chalk
146 x 84 mm.
Inscribed in black chalk, lower margin: *Gabriel de S^t^ Aubin. f. l'ami de Young*... (remainder of inscription largely illegible)
Collections: de Goncourt, stamp lower margin of each (Lugt 1089);
Mme la Marquise de Ganay
References: Dacier 916-917

The first of the two designs for a frontispiece was engraved by Augustin de Saint-Aubin for the third volume of *Oeuvres Diverses*, the first French edition of Edward Young's writings (translated by Le Tourneur, Paris, 1770). Young is best known for his *Night Thoughts*, a two volume collection of poems rich in allusions to death and other melancholic themes. Gabriel's frontispiece design shows a portrait medallion surrounded by attributes with appropriately elegiac connotations: a small casket, an hour-glass, a skull holding several quill pens, and a burning oil lamp. A bat with outspread wings enframes the top of the medallion.

The second frontispiece shows the medallion held by a winged figure while, at the bottom right, a seated woman veiled in mourning holds a pen, presumably a reference to the Muse of Poetry lamenting Young's death. A bleak moonlit landscape with a sarcophagus and obelisque is at the left. Since both portrait medallions contain only a faint sketch of the author, one assumes that Gabriel was asked only to provide the surround for a portrait by an English artist who could have drawn Young from life.

Below the second drawing is a tantalizing inscription in the artist's minuscule hand "Gabriel de S Aubin. f. l'ami de Young...." There is no evidence that Saint-Aubin and the writer could have known or corresponded with one another. Hence the word "ami" does not necessarily indicate a friendship between the two. One could interpret it in a broader sense to mean "one in sympathy with" Young. Gabriel would then be identifying his own disillusioned ambitions with Young's melancholic reflections on life.

Mrs. Charles Slatkin, New York

51. CLITIE RECEIVED BY FRÉDÉRIC: SCENE FROM *LE FAUCON*

Pen and brown ink, with watercolor and gouache; 1771-1772
169 x 109 mm. (sheet); 133 x 91 mm. (drawing)
Inscribed in pen and brown ink, lower left: *Fait pour M. Sedaine en mars 1771*; below in pen: *Gabriel de S^t^ Aubin f^t^*; in black crayon: *M. de Grandpré*; at right in

brush and brown ink: *peint en mars 1772*
Collections: Marmontel: David-Weill
References: Dacier 151; Henriot, III, p. 175 reprod.

Saint-Aubin again turned to Sedaine for the subject of this watercolor, perhaps with the hope that it would be engraved as a frontispiece. Sedaine's plot is based on a fable by La Fontaine in which the capricious heroine Clitie demands that Frédéric, a falconer, sacrifice his means of livelihood. When she learns that he already has done so, Clitie is deeply touched and declares her love for him. The play did not meet with success and closed after five performances (Günther 1908, p. 58), which may explain why Saint-Aubin's design remained unpublished. The first of Saint-Aubin's inscriptions, stating that the watercolor was executed in 1771, must be an error since the comic opera was first performed on March 19, 1772.

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased as the Gift of Walter Baker

52. ALLEGORY ON THE DEATH OF FRANÇOIS BOUCHER

Watercolor with pen and ink; 1773
139 x 96 mm.
Inscribed in pen, lower left: S[t] Aubin f 1773
lower margin: *Les Graces pleurent la Mort de François Boucher. Peintre*
Collection: J. Dupan
References: Dacier 88; Regina Shoolman Slatkin, "Portraits of François Boucher," *Apollo,* Oct., 1971, pp. 280-291, repro. fig. 25

François Boucher, *Premier Peintre du Roi,* died on May 30, 1770. In his youth Saint-Aubin had studied with Boucher, so it is not surprising that Gabriel was affected by the death of his former teacher. The allegory is set in the studio of an affluent artist, with a canvas and easel resting against one wall. Two Graces and a putto recline on a comfortable upholstered couch, behind which is a socle with another Grace holding a medallion portrait of the artist. Through a doorway one views an elegantly panelled room. Although Dacier described the watercolor as a project for a monument to Boucher, it is impossible to imagine the drawing translated into a three dimensional medium.

Lent anonymously

53. RENDEZ-VOUS IN A PARK

Black chalk heightened with white chalk, pen and brown ink; 1774
224 x 147 mm.
Inscribed in black chalk, on pedestal: *20 May 1774 / a 8* . . . (illegible word)
Collections: Marquis de Fourquevaulx; A. Beurdeley; Mme. Salvator Mayer; Jean Dubois; E. Delagarde
References: Dacier 543; Roger de Portalis, *Les dessinateurs d'illustration au dix-huitième siècle,* Paris, 1877, p. 570; New York, 1959, no. 80

This drawing and its companion representing a statue of Diana were both associated by Dacier with the Tuileries gardens, although there is no justification for doing so. The artist's inscription notes the date, followed by a partially illegible script no doubt referring to the time of day. A study of a seated woman was surely added later, as was often Saint-Aubin's habit, since she crowds the statue's space. The faint background sketch

of a curved arcade also recurs in the companion drawing of Diana (see *Graphic Arts of Five Centuries: Prints and Drawings*, William H. Schab Gallery, New York, catalogue 26, no. 166, repro. inside back cover), suggesting that both studies were drawn in one of the parks in or around Paris.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection

54. VENTE DES ESTAMPES

Pen and black ink, brush with gray and brown wash, over black chalk; mid-1770s
150 x 129 mm.

Collections: La Béraudière; David-Weill

References: Dacier 808; Henriot III, p. 417, repro.

Gabriel haunted the auction rooms of Paris, crayon in hand, noting in sketchbooks or sales catalogues the works of art being sold. As well, he was fascinated by the excitement of the sales themselves. In this study of print connoisseurs Saint-Aubin not only captures the excitement of the figures examining the prints prior to their sale, but adds an uncommon element of caricature, particularly the faces of the two men at the far right.

A date for the drawing can only be suggested in a general way. Saint-Aubin's wash drawings from the mid- to late-1770s use chalk and brush broadly to define a space filled with light, with figures added concisely in pen, crayon or a fine brush (see Dacier, 1931, pls. XIV, XV, XVI). The luminosity of the present work derives from a skillful contrast of cool gray and warm bistre washes, a combination often found in Saint-Aubin's late drawings.

Rosenberg and Stiebel, Inc., New York

55. LES COMESTIBLES INSTRUCTIFS ET FRIANDS

Brush and gray wash, pen and brown ink, over graphite pencil; 1778
185 x 155 mm.

Inscribed in pen, upper left; *G d SA 12 janvier 1778 / les Comestibles instructifs et friands*

Collections: G. Mühlbacher; Mme Salvator Mayer; David-Weill; Charles Dunlap

References: Dacier 175; Henriot, III, no. 403

Two couples are seated at the dinner table, in the center of which is a globe being carved as if it were a roasted fowl. Seated at the right, the host is about to serve the party with a knife and a compass. Undoubtedly Saint-Aubin is satirizing a then-current geographic theory. His companion, pouring wine with one hand, holds in the other what may be a carpenter's or spirit level.

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. Gift of Charles E. Dunlap

56. THE PERISTYLE OF SAINTE GENEVIÈVE, PARIS

Pen and brown ink, brush and gray wash, over black chalk; 1776-1779
185 x 154 mm.

Reference: Dacier 418

Saint-Aubin has placed himself under the peristyle of the church, to one side of the central entrance. Since the scaffolding was removed from the colonnade in 1776 (see

Dacier 414), the drawing must have been executed after that date. In 1778 and 1779 Gabriel drew other views of Soufflot's church, the construction of which was beset by problems from its beginning in 1756 until its completion twenty-three years later.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

57. LE COURS DU CHIMISTE B.-G. SAGE À LA MONNAIE

Pen, brush and gray wash over black chalk; 1779
198 x 130 mm.
Inscribed in pen, lower margin: *Par Gabriel S^t Aubin 1779;* inscribed in pencil, lower margin: *Leçon de M. Sage à l'Hotel de la Monoye*
Collections: Jacques Doucet; G. Pardinel; François Coty
References: Dacier 435; Dilke 1902, repro. opp. p. 134; Dacier 1911; Ann Arbor 1969, no. 69

The chair of domestic mineralogy and metallurgy was created at the Hôtel des Monnaies on June 11, 1778. B.-G. Sage, a member of the Académie des Sciences, was appointed to the position and began teaching on Dec. 2. Three drawings by Gabriel record his demonstrations (Dacier 435-437) which attracted large audiences. Here we see Sage standing in front of a large fireplace, holding a glass vessel in one hand. A few touches of chalk and ink wash marvellously define his gestures as he lectures to the assembly seated around the table.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Smith, Bethesda, Maryland

58. DESIGN FOR A TOMB

Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash heightened with white ink, over black chalk; late 1770s
170 x 117 mm. (border); 235 x 156 mm. (sheet)

Two putti hold aloft a platter on which rests an object marked with a cross. The putti arise from clouds which, in turn, rest on a socle. The purpose of the drawing is not known. An attribution to Gabriel is plausible, although the drawing style, executed broadly and with a multitude of hasty corrections, is exceptional.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

59. STUDY OF A MAN READING WITH A CAT ON HIS LAP

Graphite pencil
150 x 100 mm. (sight)
Collection: Jean Dubois
Reference: Dacier 407

Dacier accepted the attribution of this drawing to Gabriel with the proviso that he knew it only from a reproduction. The sheet illustrates the problem of distinguishing between Gabriel's drawing style and that of other artist members of his family. The informal domestic character of the scene certainly would have appealed to our artist, but is the hand actually his? The seated man's figure has a strangely flat quality since the folds of his suit do not define the volumes underneath with the fullness Gabriel gives even to an ephemeral sketch. Line is used with a short, staccato rhythm alien to the cursive, billowing flow of Gabriel's crayon. At this point it would be presumptuous to propose another attribution since our knowledge of alternatives is still quite unformed. Either

Charles-Germain, Gabriel's elder brother, their younger brother Augustin, or Charles-Germain's eldest daughter Marie-Françoise would be alternatives. An unpublished sketchbook in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University (Bequest of Marian Harris Phinney) contains sketches many of which are close in style to this drawing. The Fogg's sketchbook shares some characteristics with Gabriel's own albums, notably studies after other works of art, but the inscriptions are demonstrably not in his hand. If the script could be identified, the book might very well be a significant document for the history of this family of artists.

Mr. Benjamin Sonnenberg, New York

60. CATALOGUE / D'ESTAMPS.../ DEPENDANTS DE LA SUCCESSION / DE M. MARIETTE.../ DONT LA VENTE COMMENCERA / LE 1ER FEVIER 1775.../ DANS UNE SALLE DES / GRANDS-AUGUSTINS... (Paris, 1775)

A. Page 50 – Standing figure of a man dressed in a seventeenth-century costume
Black and red chalks
215 x 135 mm. (irregular)
Inscribed in black chalk, upper right margin: *S... tin... 64 et 3 autres*

B. Page 51 – Sketch after no. 658 *(Portrait of Titian and his Misiress,* etching by Van Dyck); lower right corner, a faint sketch after a portrait of a woman; and various notations of price after most catalogue numbers
Black chalk
215 x 135 mm. (irregular)

The figure of a gesticulating man wearing a seventeenth-century costume is drawn on an unusually large scale, since Saint-Aubin's rapid notations after works of art are normally of thumbnail size. Numbers 640-651 in the auction of Mariette's duplicate prints were sold in lots. While going through them, the artist must have been struck by this figure, perhaps one of the "Images nommées des Modes" from catalogue number 640, which Gabriel added to the left margin of his auction catalogue.

John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia (to be shown in Baltimore only)

61. CATALOGUE / DES TABLEAUX / ET / AUTRES EFFETS / DU CABINET DE M. THÉLUSSON / DONT LA VENTE SE SERA DANS UNE DES / SALLES DES GRANDS AUGUSTINS / LE LUNDI, PREMIER DECEMBRE 1777...(Paris, 1777)

A. Page 8 – Five sketches after paintings: no. 27 – Klingstedt, *Diana Pursuing the Nymph Calisto;* no. 29 – Domenico Barbiere, no title; no. 30 – Poussin, *The Deification of Aeneas;* no. 31 – Poussin, *Rest On the Flight Into Egypt;* and various notations of purchasers and prices
Black chalk
210 x 135 mm. (irregular)

B. Page 9 – Six sketches after paintings: no. 32 – Claude Vignon, *Bust of a Woman* (Judith?); no. 33 – Claude Lorraine, *Landscape;* no. 34 – Eustache Lesueur, *Virgin and Child;* no. 35 – Sebastian Bourdon, *Travellers Resting;* no. 36 – van der Meulen, *Two Battlepieces;* and various notations of purchasers, prices, and annotations to catalogue entries

Black chalk
210 x 135 mm. (irregular)

Of the eleven sketches after paintings, only the Poussin *Rest On The Flight*... can be readily identified (now Oskar Reinhard Institute, Winterthur; see Anthony Blunt, *The Paintings Of Nicolas Poussin*..., London, 1966, cat. 64). The other Poussin subject is not among the extant paintings or seventeenth-century engravings. Gabriel is amazingly selective in his choice of cogent details to delineate these multi-figure compositions and even achieves some definition of atmospheric effect, as in his notations after Claude and van der Meulen.

John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia (to be shown in Baltimore only)

62. CATALOGUE / DE TABLEAUX / GOUACHES, MINIATURES, EMAIL, PASTELS,.../ QUI COMPOSENT LE CABINET / DE M.xxx / DONT LA VENTE SE SERA AU PLUS OFFRANT & A DENIER / COMPTANT, LE VENDREDI 26, & SAMEDI 27 / NOVEMBRE 1779...(Paris, 1779)

A. Page 12 – Eight sketches after marble and bronze sculptures, a sketch after a beaker, and various notations of purchases and prices
Black chalk
210 x 135 mm. (irregular)

B. Page 13 – Three sketches after sculptures, three sketches after vases of precious materials, and various notations of purchases and prices
Black chalk
210 x 135 mm. (irregular)

Saint-Aubin's sketches after sculpture and *objets de virtu* are among the most ingratiating of his catalogue notations. The play of light over these objects fascinated the artist as he moved through the salesroom with his catalogue at hand. With a few telling accents he set to paper the essential character of the work, whether the strained poses of Hercules and Mars (nos. 62, 63) or Mme. de Pompadour's calm, aristocratic bearing as recorded by Vassé (no. 71).

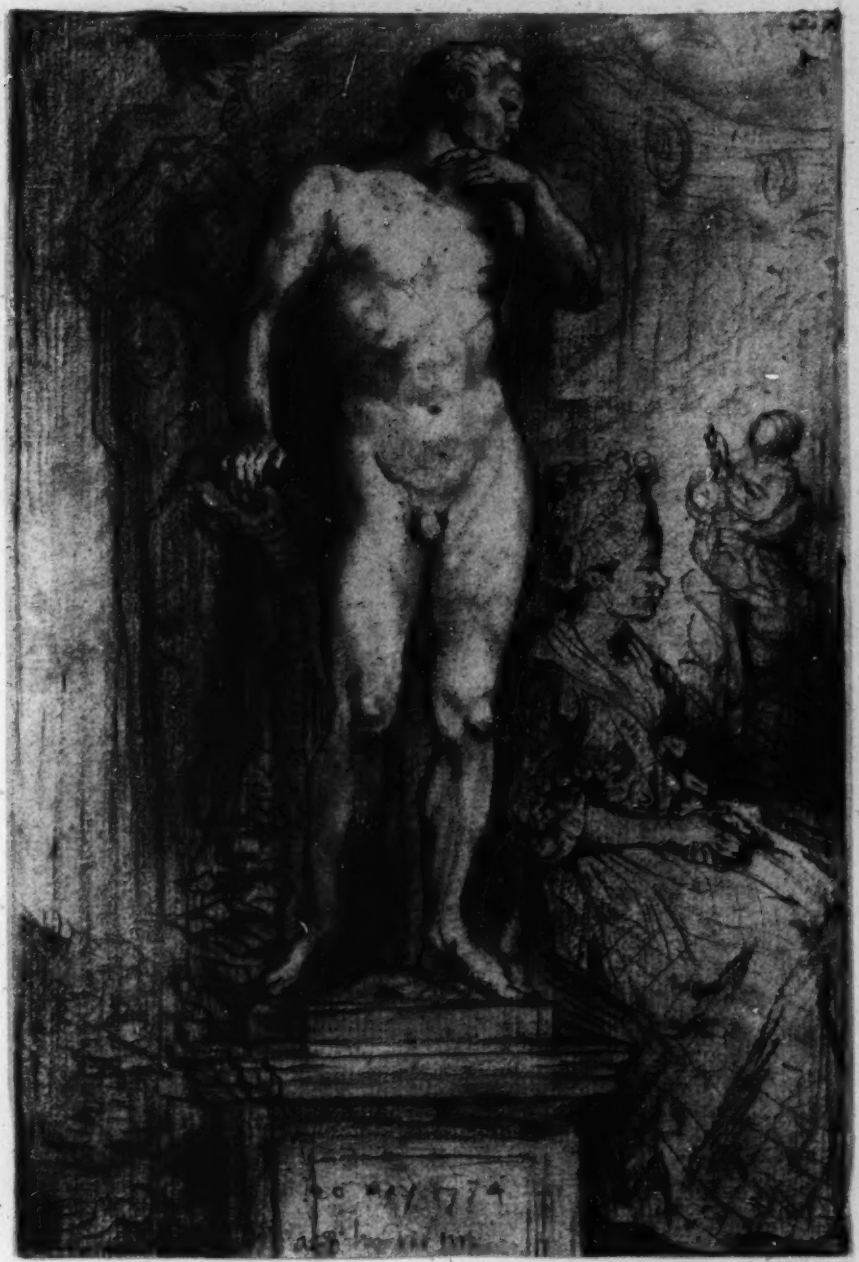
John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia (to be shown in Baltimore only)

49.

50.

51.

52.



53.

54.

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57.

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59.

Bazin, des premieres épreuves.

640 Plusieurs milles d'Images nommées des Modes, idem.

641 Plusieurs milles de petits & moyens Paysages, par Pérelle.

642 Une quantité d'Oiseaux, Animaux quadrupedes, Fleurs & Paysages, par Hollar, Flamen, Barlow, Guillaume, &c.

643 Beaucoup de grandes pieces d'après différents grands Peintres Italiens, Flamands & François, faites pour des Thèses, anciennes épreuves.

644 Beaucoup d'autres estampes d'un format plus petit & au même usage.

645 Une quantité de Cartes géographiques, par Sanson, Jaillior & autres.

646 Un grand nombre de volumes de papier blanc, reliés en maroquin, veau & parchemin.

647 Un grand nombre de porte-feuilles de diverses grandeurs.

648 Plusieurs Porte-feuilles remplis d'estampes de différents Maîtres, qui seront partagés chacun just, en divers lots.

649 Un Porte-feuille rempli de différens dessins de plusieurs Maîtres, qui sera aussi divisé en plusieurs lots.

650 Un Porte-feuille rempli d'estampes, de M. le C. de Caylus, d'après Bourdon & autres Maîtres.

651 Plusieurs suites de Vues de Suede, d'Italie & d'Allemagne.

60A.

(8)

Hase.
Diane, chassant [illegible]

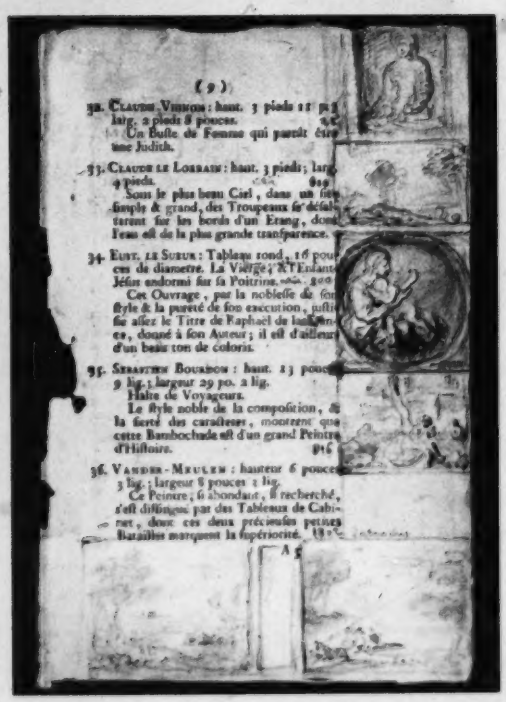
Mens : hauteur 12 pouces 7 lig.; larg. 15 pouces 6 lig.
Paris, secondé par Vénus, ravit Hélène & l'engage à fuir. 431

Domin. Barbier, hauteur 17 pouces 3 lig. largeur 24 pouces. 150

PEINTRES FRANÇOIS ou élevés en France.

Nicolas Poussin : hauteur 2 pieds 6 p. largeur 3 pieds.
La dédication d'Enée. Si l'on a quelquefois dit que le célebre Poussin avoit une couleur lourde, on ne peut lui faire ce reproche dans ce magnifique Tableau, dans lequel la plus belle entente de couleur locale est réunie à la variété des formes, à la justesse des caracteres, & à la touche la plus légere. 2650
Hauteur 2 pieds 8 p. 6 lig.; larg. 2 pieds 3 pouces.
Repos en Egypte.
Le Poussin a formé une Scene agréable & riante d'objets qu'il conserve, en même-temps dignes de nos respects. Les expressions vives des Anges qui viennent rendre leurs hommages au vrai Jésus, la précision & le choix des formes, & la légereté avec laquelle elles sont rendues, contribuent tout ensemble à la perfection de l'Ouvrage. 4200

61A.



(9)

32. Claude Vernet : haut. 3 pieds 11 pc. larg. 2 pieds 8 pouces. 95
Un Buste de Femme qui paroît être une Judith.

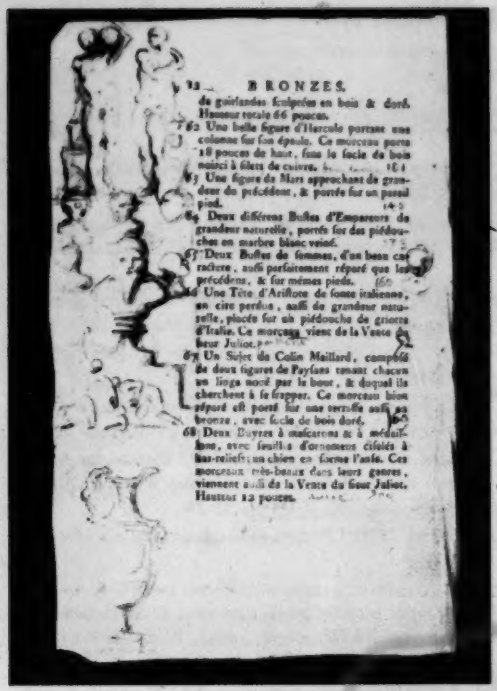
33. Claude le Lorrain : haut. 3 pieds; larg. 4 pieds. 810
Sous le plus beau Ciel, dans un site simple & grand, des Troupeaux se désaltèrent sur les bords d'un Etang, dont l'eau est de la plus grande transparence.

34. Eust. le Sueur : Tableau rond, 16 pouces de diametre. La Vierge, & l'Enfant Jésus endormi sur sa Poitrine. 200
Cet Ouvrage, par la noblesse de son style & la pureté de son execution, justifie assez le Titre de Raphaël de la France, donné à son Auteur; il est d'ailleurs d'un beau ton de coloris.

35. Sebastien Bourdon : haut. 23 pouces 9 lig.; largeur 29 po. 2 lig.
Halte de Voyageurs.
Le style noble de la composition, & la fierté des caracteres, montrent que cette Bambochade est d'un grand Peintre d'Histoire. 915

36. Vander-Meulen : hauteur 6 pouces 3 lig.; largeur 8 pouces 1 lig.
Ce Peintre, si abondant, si recherché, s'est distingué par des Tableaux de Cabinet, dont ces deux précieux petits Batailles marquent la supériorité. 181

61B.



de guirlandes sculptées en bois & doré. Hauteur totale 66 pouces.

62 Une belle figure d'Hercule portant une colonne sur son épaule. Ce morceau porte 18 pouces de haut, sans la socle de bois noirci à filets de cuivre.

63 Une figure de Mars approchant de grandeur du précédent, & portée sur un pareil pied.

64 Deux différens Bustes d'Empereurs de grandeur naturelle, portés sur des piédouches en marbre blanc veiné.

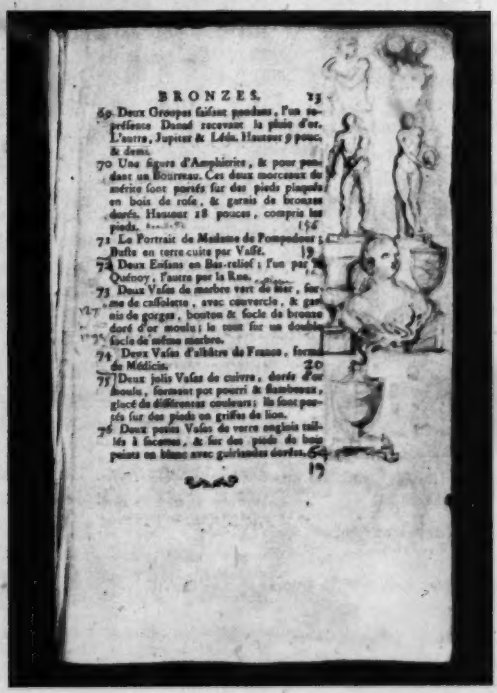
65 Deux Bustes de femmes, d'un beau caractere, aussi parfaitement réparé que les précédens, & sur mêmes pieds.

66 Une Tête d'Aristote de fonte italienne, en cire perdue, aussi de grandeur naturelle, placée sur un piédouche de griotte d'Italie. Ce morceau vient de la Vente du sieur Julliot.

67 Un Sujet du Colin Maillard, composé de deux figures de Paysans tenant chacun un linge noué par le bout, & dont ils cherchent à se frapper. Ce morceau bien réparé est porté sur une terrasse aussi en bronze, avec socle de bois doré.

68 Deux Buires à mascarons & à médaillons, avec feuilles d'ornemens ciselés à bas-relief; un chien en forme l'anse. Ces morceaux très-beaux dans leurs genres, viennent aussi de la Vente du sieur Juliot. Hauteur 12 pouces.

624.



69 Deux Groupes faisant pendans, l'un représente Danaé recevant la pluie d'or. L'autre, Jupiter & Léda. Hauteur 9 pouc. 6 lign.

70 Une figure d'Amphitrite, & pour pendant un Bourreau. Ces deux morceaux de métite sont portés sur des pieds plaqués en bois de rose, & garnis de bronzes dorés. Hauteur 18 pouces, compris les pieds.

71 Le Portrait de Madame de Pompadour; Buste en terre cuite par Vassé.

72 Deux Enfans en Bas-relief; l'un par Quesnoy, l'autre par le Rue.

73 Deux Vases de marbre vert de mer, forme de cassolette, avec couvercle, & garnis de gorges, bouton & socle de bronze doré d'or moulu; le tout sur un double socle de même marbre.

74 Deux Vases d'albâtre de France, forme de Médicis.

75 Deux jolis Vases de cuivre, dorés d'or moulu, formant pot pourri & flambeaux, glacé de différentes couleurs; ils sont portés sur des pieds en griffes de lion.

76 Deux petits Vases de verre anglois taillés à facettes, & sur des pieds de bois peints en blanc avec guirlandes dorées.

62B.

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NOTES TO D'OENCH

1. Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Recueil de plantes*, an album of 250 watercolors and drawings of plants and flowers executed from 1736 until 1785. Charles-Germain also included another brief biographical note on his brother in the Recueil, as well as a longer one in the *Livre des Saint-Aubin*, a collection of drawings by the family. The complete texts are found in Dacier 1929, pp. 14-15. All translations from the French are by the present author.
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3. *Ibid.*, p. 106; and Dacier 1929, p. 148.
4. Quoted from Colton 1965, p. 120.
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8. Wescher 1969, p. 154.
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11. Colton 1965, p. 8, note 14.
12. Dacier 1929, p. 19.
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15. Louis Courajod, *l'Ecole royale des élèves protégés*, Paris, 1874, p. lxviii, note 2.
16. Mathey 1950, p. 107; and Cailleux 1960, supp. i.
17. Pevsner 1940, p. 87.
18. Colton 1965, p. 123.
19. Dacier 1929, p. 38.
20. Cailleux 1960, supp. i.
21. Dacier 1929, p. 36.
22. The Perronet Sale of paintings, prints, and drawings in 1767; several "compositions and studies" were sold at the Tournier Sale in 1773. See Dacier 1929, pp. 35-36.
23. Fahy-Watson 1973, pp. 340-344.
24. Von Grimm 1879, p. 497. Tourneux notes that the artist could be none other than Saint-Aubin. Dacier catalogues the illustrated *livret* as no. 1034. It is now lost.
25. Dacier 1929, p. 92.
26. Dacier 1027-1063. An additional illustrated catalogue is in the Wrightsman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; see Fahy-Watson 1973, p. 348.
27. Dacier 1929, p. 143.
28. Dacier 1943, p. 2.
29. Dacier 1920, pp. 101-102.
30. Dacier 1929, p. 32.
31. Jean-Michel Sedaine, *Recueil de poèsies*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1760, quoted in Dacier 1929, p. 30. The painting was executed for the *Elèves protégés* competition in 1753.
32. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Boston, 1955, pp. 302-309.
33. Quoted in Dacier 1929, p. 74.
34. Wescher 1969, pp. 156, 161.
35. Dacier 1925, p. 74.
36. Dacier 1929, p. 33.
37. Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth, His Life, Art, and Times*, 2 vols., New Haven, 1971, Vol. I, pp. 475-476.
38. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 20, 211; see also Jean-André Rouquet, *L'Etat des arts en Angleterre*, Paris, 1775; and *idem*, *Lettres de monsieur . . . à un de ses amis à Paris, pour lui expliquer les estampes de Mons. Hogarth*, London, 1746.
39. Brookner, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
40. Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Roger Lewinter, 15 vols., Paris, 1969-1972, Vol. VI, p. 39.
41. Lorenz Eitner, *Neo-Classicism and Romanticism*, 1750-1850, 2 vols., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970, Vol. I., p. 66.
42. Wescher 1969, p. 164.
43. Diderot observed this of Greuze at the Salon of 1765; see Diderot, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
44. Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970, p. 115 and figure 121. Rosenblum states that the present whereabouts of the painting is unknown.
45. See Montgolfier 1971, figures 105, 106 for the drawings of Saint-Aubin, and figures 96, 97 for the drawings of Robert.
46. Dacier 1929, p. 37.
47. Harris 1969, p. 191.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-192.

NOTES TO FIELD

1. See Ellen D'Oench's comments on the roles of various types of subjects in Saint-Aubin's art. With the exceptions of the late works, *le Tombeau* and *la Conférence des avocats*, the etchings hardly betray the Romantic identification with the inner or awesome forces of man or nature. Gabriel generally shuns probing human character or feeling, contenting himself with celebrating the joy of public events and personages.
2. The parallels between Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) and Saint-Aubin are especially interesting for they show each artist in an unexpected light. Each was nearly obsessed by the life of the streets, albeit by different social strata. Each explored new avenues of expression which would loosen art from its academic restrictions; the mode they often shared was that of caricature. In many of Gabriel's most exciting drawings and in a few of his prints one glimpses a Daumiesque exaggeration of movement and action set against a Paris background, as is exemplified by the important and large drawing, *Boulevard Scene* of ca. 1760 (see Amsterdam 1974, no. 109).
3. E.g., the Pont-Neuf and Notre-Dame in the *Allégorie sur les mariages . . .*, the people of Paris in the *Allégorie sur la convalescence . . .*, and the Place Louis XV (Place de la Concorde) in the *Allégorie sur l'érection du statue. . . .*
4. This point is also made by Mrs. D'Oench. Note the unusual unfocused and casual composition of *les*

Chaises, the manner in which shadows fall over the personages of *Vue du Salon du Louvre*, or the homeless leg that juts into the *Théâtre Italien*. Saint-Aubin's fascination with the theater surely affected his compositional ideas much as it would those of Daumier seventy or eighty years later. It was part of the growing demand for momentary realism in contemporary guise, itself part of the revolution in subject matter which sought to mirror the rising lower-middle class.

5. See catalogue numbers 6, 14, 17, 19-21, 27-28.

6. It was Gabriel himself whom Baudelaire had in mind when composing the opening paragraphs of *le Peintre de la vie moderne* in 1863. Baudelaire's hero, Constantin Guys, is a direct stylistic descendant of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin.

7. Adhémar 1963, pp. 120-124.

8. There is no evidence of contact between Fragonard and Saint-Aubin during their Academy years of the early 1750s. From the first (1752?) Frago's etchings manifest the influence of Italian etching, especially those of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, his brother, Giovanni Domenico, and of Benedetto Castiglione.

9. Our numbers represent those assigned by Dacier in his 1931 and 1914 catalogues respectively.

10. There is no assurance that this dated reference to Sedaine (see catalogue 37) represents the date of execution of the drawing. What more logical moment than ca. 1750 could be assigned to the drawing, for it was then that Boucher was Gabriel's teacher at the Academy?

11. This work, unique in Paris, was etched onto a scrap of copperplate that had originally served as a title page (?) for a geographic study of the Rhône Valley and Grenoble.

12. See Georges Wildenstein, *Fragonard Aquafortiste*, Paris, 1956, no. 1, *Saint Ermite dans le désert* (1752-1756). The inscription on the plate acknowledges its derivation from a drawing by Boucher. In his introduction, Wildenstein advances the theory that Fragonard learned the rudiments of etching while at the Ecole Royale des Elèves Protégés (after 1752). It was official policy just at that time – and possibly supervised by Boucher himself – to encourage students to etch those of their drawings that seemed reasonably accomplished. Although we lack specific facts, it might be that Saint-Aubin learned etching not from his brother, Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, but at the Academy. After all, personal etching was much in vogue. The Director of Fine Arts for all France was the Marquis de Marigny, brother of Madame de Pompadour who became a rather devoted amateur etcher under the tutelage of Charles-Nicolas Cochin fils. Cochin became an Academician in 1751, Director of the Royal Print Cabinet in 1752 and obviously worked closely with Marigny just at the time when Gabriel was maturing.

Whereas Frago's first surviving etching is definitely of the prevailing "blond" tonality, Gabriel's early work is conspicuously darker. The problem in searching for Gabriel's teacher is that one just does not encounter any other artist whose "manner" coincides with that of Gabriel's early production – not those of Boucher, Comte de Caylus, Cochin fils, Huquier, Watteau, Gillot, etc. One is forced to turn to the seventeenth century, to Rembrandt and Claude first of all, to Callot and Vignon secondarily. Mrs. D'Oench's suggestion that Piranesi's work, which was just appearing at Blondel's Academy in the late 1740s, was the source for Gabriel's dark manner needs further study.

13. Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin (1721-1786) as an etcher is an enigma. Sometime in the late 1740s he began one of the most charming series of fantasies of the entire century, the *Papilloneries humaines*, in all, 15 plates. Not only are these works of great rarity, but they manifest so high a level of artistic and technical competence that one is at a loss to explain the lack of further significant graphic work from Charles-Germain's hand.

14. See *Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, Master Draughtsman of the Italian Baroque*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, September-November 1971. Introduction and catalogue by Ann Percy; Foreword by Sir Anthony Blunt.

15. Huquier was a publisher and dealer as well as an engraver. His works have received little attention but embody some of the same freedom of fantasy and touch associated with the Saint-Aubins. The etchings executed after Watteau were influenced by the light, open style of the master's own few efforts on copper and are especially fresh for reproductive prints, for example *la Chasseuse* (Bocher). Some of Huquier's technique – the manner of working with thin, irregularly curved, short strokes – was passed on to François Boucher and is discernable in the works of the 1730s.

16. *Laban Seeking his Household Gods* was a particularly favorite subject of the seventeenth century. See Stechow 1966. Another Saint-Aubin subject of the early 1750s, *la Foire de Bezons*, had been painted by Octavien as a *morceau de reception* for the Royal Academy in 1725! Dacier, in his interesting study of 1925, *la Gravure de genre et de moeurs*, page 24, adds that no one, at so early a date, would have "dared" to engrave such a subject.

17. Federigo Barocci only etched four plates, but they were of such originality that they influenced subsequent generations of printmakers. One of these was Jacques Bellange of Nancy whose early plates were unmistakably molded by the types and techniques of the older Italian artist. There is no way to show that Saint-Aubin knew their works, and the comparatively crude faceting and mannered aspects of *Laban* may be little more than fortuitous rapprochements. In no sense does Gabriel achieve the soft, shimmering colorism of Barocci's draperies nor the abstractly structured harmonies of Bellange's complex surfaces. See Nicole Walch, *Die Radierungen des Jacques Bellange*, Munich, 1971.

18. The list of works which were poorly etched is fairly extensive. Among those showing either incomplete, uneven, or false biting (where the ground breaks down during the plate's immersion in the acid) are *les Deux amants, Reconciliation d'Absalon et de David, Vue du Salon du Louvre, Laban cherchant ses dieux, les Quatres vases, la Conversation galante, l'Incendie de la Foire Saint-Germain, Allégorie sur l'érection de la statue de Louis XV*, and *le Théâtre Italien*.

19. Claude Vignon and, later, Claude Gillot (1673-1722) teacher of Watteau, represent the last of the 17th century draughtsmanly etchers. Both employed fairly heavy, contrasty lines applied with an openness that was lost in the 18th century's search for reproductive tone, detail, and anonymity. Something of Vignon and even Claude's (Claude Lorrain 1600-1682) atmospheric motion, and coarseness of execution lives on in Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's work, just as the bucolic, relief-like *Festival* etchings of Gillot find a later echo in the *Bacchanales* of Fragonard.

20. De Goncourt 1873, I, p. 481.

21. See, for example, Stefano's etching of the *Medici Vase* (de Veame 832) which is typical of the trophy themes that often inspired the etcher of the 17th century.

22. We cannot agree with Dacier and de Goncourt that the formalisms of Callot (1592-1635) – either those of style or technique – reassert themselves in the work of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. There exists, of course, a superficial parallel in their fascination with encompassing many figures in a limited space. But even in their subjects, they part company. Callot dramatizes the grand events of his day, while Gabriel seeks out the more intimate and often unimportant. Callot's line and composition is that of the engraver – formal, hard, and linear; Gabriel's is disordered, soft, and, at its best, painterly.

23. Too little attention has been given to those works for which Saint-Aubin executed only the preparatory drawing, the remainder being engraved by another. Sometimes this drawing was on paper, but once in a while Gabriel probably etched the design onto the copperplate. There is still some question as to the authorship of the first states of the *le Triomphe de Pompée dans Rome* and *la Mort de Germanicus* (Dacier 948 & 951a). Did Gabriel do more than supply the drawings, that is, did he etch the basic drawing onto the plates as he did for the four scenes for the *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes Occidentales* (D. 907, 908, 909A and 910)? The skill evidenced by Gabriel in other commercial works (like the *Coquilles et Agates* for the sales catalogue of P.-C.-A. Helle in 1763) reveals a well-tutored vignettist.

24. Dacier links *le Tombeau* with Augustin de Saint-Aubin's print of the tomb of Languet de Gergy in Saint-Sulpice (Bocher 459) etched in 1757. We find this date too early.

25. See Mrs. D'Oench's remarks on the proto-Romantic aspects of Saint-Aubin's late subjects.

26. These consist of new states of *Mérope* of 1750 (D.762-4), of the *Triomphe de Pompée* (D.948-22), of two of the plates for Bossu's *Nouveaux Voyages* (D.907 & 908 – 40 & 41), and of the *Théâtre Italien* (D.789-51).

27. Dacier 1929, p. 52.

28. The second-half of the 18th century was devoted to the invention or perfection of tonal processes with which to reproduce works in other media. Yet Gabriel never experimented with aquatint, mezzotint, soft-ground etching, the roulette, or any of the crayon manners. In short, Gabriel's goal excluded the reproduction of anything foreign to the medium in which he was working.

29. Although most of his drawings are washed with watercolor, virtually none of the prints show plate-tone; one wonderful exception is the second state of the last work on copper, *la Conférence des avocats*.

30. Occasionally Saint-Aubin used warmer-tone inks and, in a few cases, brown, notably in the *Nouvellistes*, *la Colère de Neptune*, and *Théâtre Italien* (see catalogue numbers 7, 29, and Dacier 789-51).

31. Moureau 1894, cited in Dacier 1929, p. 65: "Les différents états de ses planches correspondent, pour ainsi dire, aux intermittences de son travail."

32. D.645-1, *Marché du boeuf gras*, 1750/1755; D.4-11, *Laban cherchant ses dieux*, 1753/1763; D.539/18, *les Chaises*, 1760/1763; *le Tonneau d'arrosage*, 1760/1762; D.508/513 – 28/33, *l'Incendie de la Foire Saint-Germain*, March 1762/October 1762/1764.

33. Printing from a grounded plate would have been rendered difficult by the solvent action of the ink. In any case, Gabriel experienced continuous difficulties with his grounds – see our remarks on the first state of the *Vue du Salon du Louvre* as well as those in note 18, above.

34. See Carlson 1963 where the sketchbook is firmly associated with the early 1760s, the time of the *Spectacle des Tuileries*.

35. The order I have given these drawings does not agree with those arrived at by either Rossiter 1962 or Carlson (see the present catalogue, entry 42).

36. Saint-Aubin obviously took some pains to preserve the direction (right and left) of his subjects when translating them into etchings. The reversal of the final drawing for the *Expulsion* is a clear case. Comparison between the watercolor and etching of *les Chaises*, and between the painting and etching of *Laban* indicates a similar maintenance of direction.

37. The lightly etched original design that was subsequently overlaid with a much more systematic network of etched and engraved lines persisted for many decades as the basis for 18th century printmaking, from Cochin père down to Moreau-le-Jeune. Whereas the first state preserved some of the white of the paper, the freshness of a sketch, and a trace of the original artist's hand, the final appearance was mechanical, totally picture-like with every millimeter covered, and hardly autographic. It was as if a veil of lines had been pulled down over a painting; one often feels as if he were peering into the background in order to perceive what is of significance. The ontogeny of a late 18th century reproductive engraving could in fact recapitulate the phylogeny of the century's approach to making images on copper – from blond to dark to tonal manner.

NOTES TO CARLSON

1. *A Course in Drawing by Nicolas Cochin and Denis Diderot . . . 1751*. Edited and translated by Phillip P. Fehl, Chicago, 1954, p. 1.
2. Dacier 1914, p. 18.
3. Dacier 1929, p. 31.
4. Dacier 1914, pp. 147-161.
5. Dacier 883-1021.
6. Dacier 1929, pp. 119-121.
7. Georges Wildenstein, *The Paintings of Fragonard*, London, 1960, catalogue numbers 304-307.
8. Dacier 1030-1063.
9. Toronto 1972-73, no. 129.
10. Fahy-Watson 1973, no. 39, described as coming from an anonymous sale, Paris, December 13, 1773.
11. Dacier 1929, p. 91.
12. Dacier 1025; Fahy-Watson 1973, no. 38.
13. Dacier 1929, pp. 147-148.

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